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NATIONAL REVIEW

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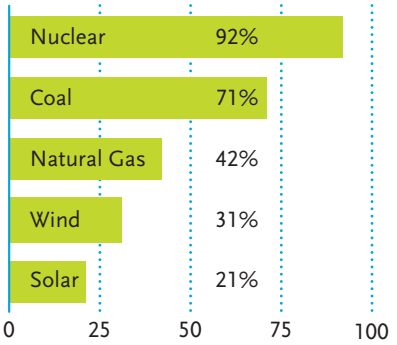

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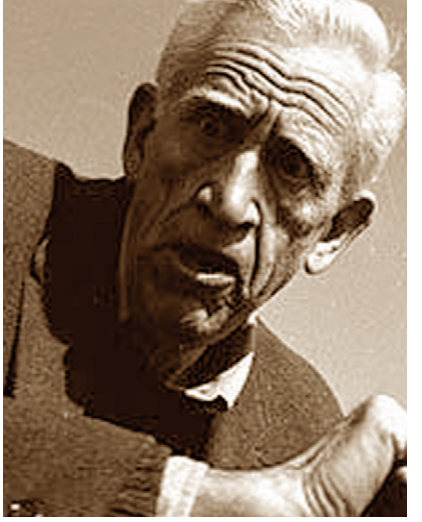

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Senator Tea Party

If Jim DeMint once looked like a crotchety conservative who was satisfied to serve in a dwindling and disgruntled minority, he now appears more like the prophet of a coming resurgence. *John J. Miller*

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Letters

The Book of Heston

In "The Week" of NATIONAL REVIEW's February 8 edition, the editors write that "people came to think that foreign slaves built the pyramids" because they were "influenced by the Book of Exodus."

The Book of Exodus clearly states that the Hebrew slaves built the grain-storage houses of Pithom and Ramses in the Nile Delta out of bricks. The only source that suggests that slaves built the stone pyramids of Egypt is the movie *The Ten Commandments*. The editors seem to watch too many movies, read too little Bible, or both.

Ivan M. Lang
Glendale, Wis.

THE EDITORS REPLY: The relevant sentence reads: "In later centuries [than that of Pharaoh Cheops], perhaps influenced by the Book of Exodus (which, however, deals with events a millennium later), people came to think that foreign slaves built the pyramids." It does not imply our belief that Exodus says the slaves built the pyramids. Indeed it anticipates Mr. Lang's point; note its "however." Of our sinful ways, we will nonetheless strive to repent.

Blood and Gore

Is my conservative bias showing, or does the caricature of a vampire in John J. Miller's "Defanged" (February 8) bear a striking resemblance to Al Gore?

Gary Simmers
Dublin, Ga.

AL GORE: FRANCOIS MORI/AP

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The Week

■ Air America has ceased operations: Talent on loan from God still trumps talent on loan from Al Franken.

■ Scott Brown, a dodgy economy, deficits big as the Rockies: The Obama administration has its problems, but maybe one they should look at is Obama himself. Obama told George Stephanopoulos his one regret so far: "We were so busy just getting stuff done and dealing with the immediate crises" that "we lost some of that sense of speaking directly to the American people." So a man who was on camera more than Lady Gaga thinks he didn't get his message out, and promises to do so more zealously in the future. Then Marion Berry, a retiring Arkansas congressman, reported that when he and other Blue Dogs worried about a replay of the Democratic wipeout of 1994, the White House "just kept telling us how good it was going to be. The president himself, when that was brought up in one group, said, 'Well, the big difference here and in '94 [is] you've got me.'" So everything's fine, and if it's not, I'll fix it. *"Forward, the Light Brigade! Charge for the guns," he said . . .*

■ In an interview with his booster Joe Klein, President Obama said, "I'll be honest with you. . . . This is just really hard." He was talking about the creation of Middle East peace: peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. He said, "This is as intractable a problem as you get." Former President Bush—excoriated by Obama, among others, for supposedly not working hard enough on the problem—would be less than human if he did not chuckle a bit.

■ Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, declared himself against "don't ask, don't tell" in congressional testimony on the heels of Obama's call for its repeal in the State of the Union. It's important to remember the purpose of the policy, which wasn't to persecute gays or to exclude them from serving, but to allow them to do so with a quiet dignity consistent with the overriding need for discipline and order in the ranks. It shouldn't be controversial to note that sexual attraction is a powerful and potentially disruptive force. All things considered, "don't ask, don't tell" has worked rather well, even with its imperfections. Gays and lesbians who have served honorably have been kicked out of the military on the basis of information provided by third parties. That's unfair, but it's the integrity of the military as an institution that matters most. Its purpose is not to be an instrument of social justice or to bestow symbolic recognition upon certain classes of people, but to fight and win the nation's wars, and this requires maintaining a culture and practices different from those dominant in civilian life. No doubt, if most combat NCOs were asked whether they want the complexity of integrating openly gay soldiers into their units added to their already formidable tasks, they'd say no—waging two wars of counterinsurgency is already difficult enough. For us, that's dispositive.

See page 7.

ROMAN GENN

■ Obama used two teleprompters to address his Middle Class Task Force (a group of about 20 people, sitting around a U-shaped table in a conference room), and two to speak at an elementary school in Falls Church (not to the students, his flacks pointed out, only to reporters afterward, so that's all right then). Obama's verbal walkers have earned the scorn of Jon Stewart. We worry less that Mr. Eloquence is so scripted, more about possible glitches. "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this [CUE NOW PLS] wall!" "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is four itself. [FIX TYPO NEXT TIME OK?]" "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains, and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or [WHO LOST THE LAST LINE DAMMIT!?]"

■ Kidding aside, the president is perfectly capable of deploying a glib intelligence without mechanical assistance. He proved this while addressing House Republicans and taking their questions, all of it on television. There is some talk of repeating the performance, even (for no compelling reason) institutionalizing it. Reactions to these things are subjective, but our impression is that Obama should be keener on a second booking than the Republicans. Their attempts at gotcha questions fizzled, and he sounded reasonable even discussing policies that are not. Nobody had the wit to ask him a pointed question or two about the Christmas bomber. (Are they waiting for an NBC reporter to do it at a press conference?) President Obama had done his homework. If there is a next time, the Republicans should too.

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■ Let's go to the videotape. President Obama tells the audience of his State of the Union address that the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* "reversed a century of law. . . . I don't think American elections should be bankrolled by America's most powerful interests or, worse, by foreign entities. . . . And I'd urge Democrats and Republicans to pass a bill that helps correct some of these problems." Democratic members of Congress give a standing ovation, the justices of the Supreme Court sit silently—except for Justice Alito, who shakes his head and murmurs, correctly, "Not true." The separation of powers entitles the powers to duke it out, and NATIONAL REVIEW believes that Congress and the executive should show less deference to the judiciary. But there should be a decorum to their struggles. It will be easier to observe if the justices stop coming to these events.

■ In his State of the Union address, President Obama had a few words to say about Iraq: "We are responsibly leaving Iraq to its people. As a candidate, I promised that I would end this war, and that is what I am doing as president." He said "we will support the Iraqi government as they hold elections, and we will continue to partner with the Iraqi people to promote regional peace and prosperity. But make no mistake: This war is ending, and all of our troops are coming home." Not a word about the purposes for which our troops have been there. Not a word about the inhuman dictatorship we toppled. Not a word about the victory we have apparently won. Not a word about the importance of that victory to the Middle East at large. We understand that President Obama does not "do" Iraq. And neither do the Democrats in general. Obama was always dead-set against the Iraq War, and as recently as the summer of 2008 was saying, "The surge is not working." The year before, Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader, declared, "This war is lost." The Democrats seem embarrassed about Iraq; they are grudging about our success there; they are sometimes outright churlish. In this war, victory is an orphan.

■ What are we to make of the president's announcement that he supports more nuclear power? Certainly the Left didn't like it; MoveOn.org members reacted more negatively to that part of the State of the Union address than to any other part. So does that mean we give the announcement three cheers? Perhaps two. The problem with the president's support is not the principle but the form it takes. Rather than slashing the massive regulatory burden on the nuclear industry that makes it uneconomic, he is merely providing $54 billion of taxpayer money in loan guarantees to make it less costly to navigate the regulatory maze. The nuclear industry has been cowed by decades of government abuse and so views this as a positive development. What has happened is that it has moved from being the red-headed stepchild of energy policy to being a ward of the state.

■ Perhaps the greatest eye-rolling moment in the State of the Union came when Obama proclaimed: "My administration has a Civil Rights Division that is once again prosecuting civil-rights violations and employment discrimination." Never mind that in his compulsive comparisons of himself with George W. Bush, the president sounds like your friend who can't stop dumping on his wife's first husband. What exactly has Obama's Civil Rights Division done? It has dropped a case against New Black Panther Party thugs who brazenly intimidated white voters in Philadelphia—a case the division had already won. It has banished the CRD lawyer who initiated that case (under Bush) to a remote office, and has stonewalled a federal investigation of the affair. In Kansas, a pair of CRD lawyers who refused to provide evidence for racial-discrimination claims against a real-estate company have been made to pay the defendants' legal expenses. And the division has boasted of plans to expand "disparate impact" lawsuits against employers who use any test on which white applicants outperform blacks. If the division is serious about prosecuting civil-rights violations, it should begin with those committed by its own staff.

■ Among the projects announced in the address was an $8 billion appropriation for high-speed rail. That's just seed money; the projected 13 regional projects will run about $10 billion apiece, not including operating costs, right-of-way acquisition, and the inevitable litigation expenses and cost overruns. And since most states are not exactly flush with cash these days, it seems likely that Uncle Sam will get stuck with the bill. All this for a "network" whose sections will not all be connected, and that will be slightly faster than driving on short hauls (Tampa to Orlando, the first route to be started, is about 90 miles) and considerably slower than flying on long ones. Yet it sounds green and will create lots of union jobs, so Democrats love it. The hard truth is that outside a very few densely populated corridors, inter-city passenger rail has been obsolete for half a century. This boondoggle is one piece of history that is well worth standing athwart.

■ Looking for a bright spot after their Brown-out in Massachusetts, liberals found one in a pair of ballot initiatives in Oregon that raised taxes to fund social services. The national dailies and newsmagazines praised Oregonians for "end[ing] two decades of tax scrimping" (*Los Angeles Times*) and "behav[ing] like responsible adults" (*Newsweek*). Upon closer examination, Oregon voters look less noble. The ballot measures raised taxes only on high-income Oregonians and corporations. Public-sector unions—which outspent the anti-tax coalition three to two—played up the populist angle, running ads that bashed "big corporations" and "Wall Street banks" for not paying their fair share. The ballot measures accomplished what few thought was possible, by making the state's tax base even more lopsided: The top 1 percent of Oregonians already pay approximately one-quarter of the state's personal-income taxes. It is easy to raise taxes on somebody else, but neither Obama, who wants to follow Oregon's lead, nor our bankrupt state governments can go very far toward solving their enormous budget problems by soaking the rich.

■ James O'Keefe, the prankster who posed as a pimp and filmed ACORN staffers conspiring to abet the trafficking of underage prostitutes, has done something foolish: He was caught dressing up as a telephone repairman to get into the office of Sen. Mary Landrieu (D., La.). There were accusations of attempted bugging. He tells a different story: Having been informed by the senator's long-suffering constituents that she refused to take their calls, explaining that her lines had been "jammed for weeks," he "decided to investigate why a representative of the people would be out of touch with her constituents for 'weeks' because her phones were broken. In investigating this matter, we decided to visit Senator Landrieu's district office—the people's office—to ask the staff if their phones were working." Mr. O'Keefe is accused of a serious crime. It is not obvious that he is guilty—that's what trials

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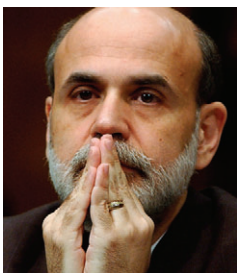
are for—but surely this is not the best application of his puckish energies. We hope he proves innocent, and can continue his excellent work more prudently.

■ While we are willing to forgive much private misbehavior in our politicians, there are limits to our tolerance. Former senator John Edwards comes in well beyond those limits. During his presidential campaign in 2007, the *National Enquirer* reported that Edwards was having an affair with campaign videographer Rielle Hunter. Edwards denounced the story as "tabloid trash." Learning that Miss Hunter was pregnant, Edwards urged campaign aide Andrew Young to claim paternity, promising that Young "would be taken care of for life." In August 2008 Edwards confessed to the affair but denied paternity of the child. Now, just ahead of publication of a tell-all campaign book by Young, Edwards has finally admitted paternity. Edwards's wife, Elizabeth, who has been fighting cancer for more than half a decade, has now left him. A federal grand jury is investigating allegations that Edwards used campaign funds to cover up the affair. What a snake! A reputable polling firm reports that Edwards is viewed positively by only 15 percent of voters in his home state, making him the "most unpopular person we've polled anywhere at any time." So while John Edwards may be bereft of moral sense, at least the people of North Carolina still have theirs.

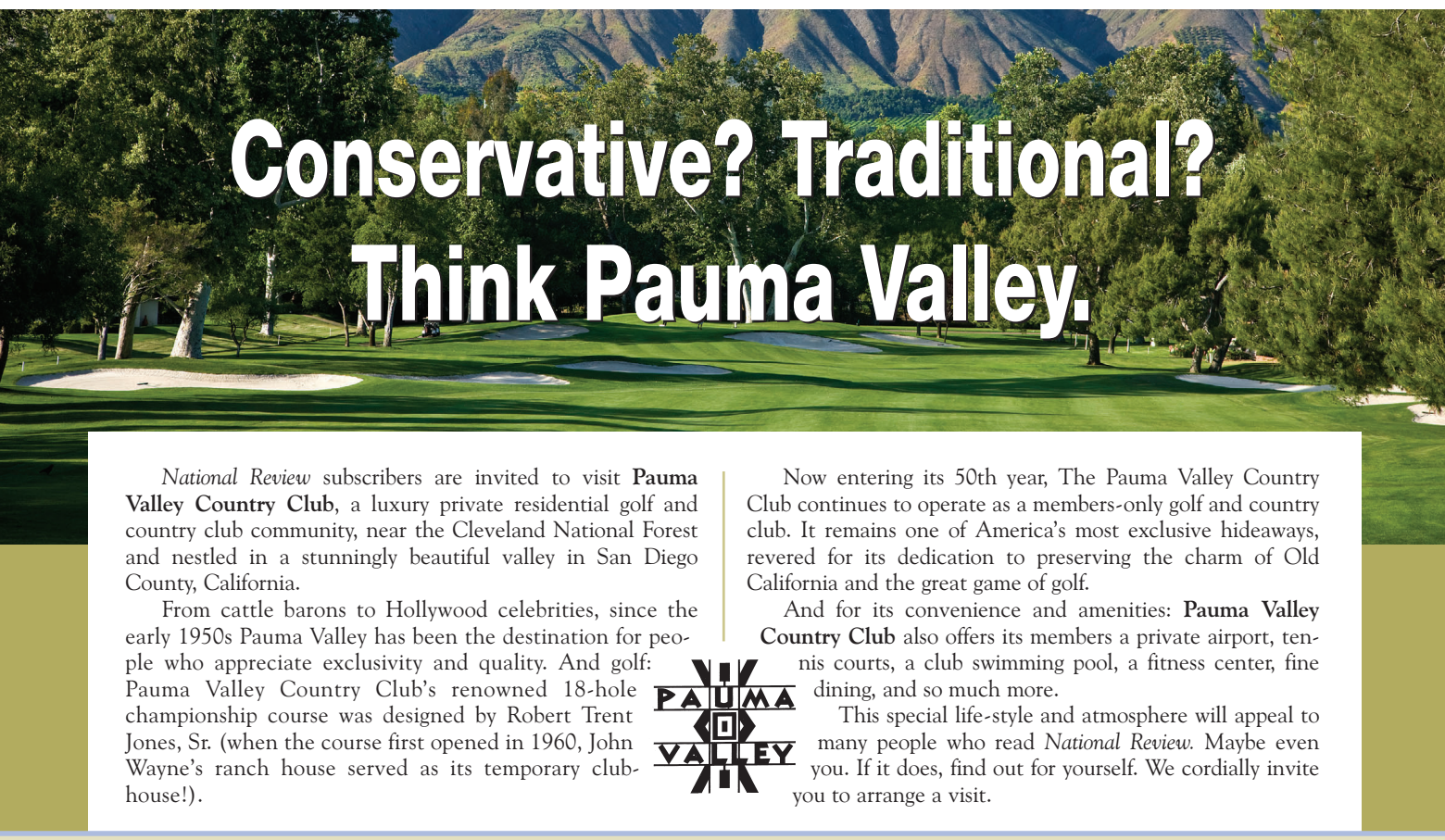
■ Sen. Arlen Specter (D., for now), in a moment of broadcast pique, condescendingly advised Rep. Michele Bachmann (R., Minn.) that she should "act like a lady." For once, the senator is happy to follow his own prescription: Unhappily, the lady he acts like is Norma Desmond. Infamous for his tireless abuse of underlings, Specter has been voted among the worst bosses on the Hill in a *Washingtonian* poll, while *Roll Call* has likened him to Simon Legree, the vicious slavemaster of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The *Washington Post* once identified "Specter flunky" as the worst job in Washington, ranking it below cleaning toilets on the Mall. Traveling abroad, the senator has been known to issue rock-star-caliber directives to State Department staff, demanding a fresh local squash opponent each afternoon at 5 o'clock, a case of Evian at every stop, and "no evening events, including dinner with the ambassador or at the embassy. The Specters like to do their own thing at night." Doing his own thing is what Specter excels at. Representative Bachmann may console herself that being lectured on graciousness by Arlen Specter is like being lectured on party loyalty by—Arlen Specter.

■ Ben Bernanke has been reconfirmed as chairman of the Fed, an event to be celebrated inasmuch as it has denied President Obama the opportunity to replace him with somebody much worse. Our advice to Helicopter Ben: Stop the presses—the ones churning out greenbacks over at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.



DENNIS COOK/AP

■ President Obama wants people to know he's angry, very angry, at Wall Street. This is the political point of the new limits on the trading activities of banks he announced in the wake of Scott Brown's victory in Massachusetts. The policy itself is less



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objectionable than the rhetoric he is using to sell it—firms that enjoy a federal backstop should indeed be prohibited from taking large risks with house money. But the details weren't thought through: The prohibition on so-called proprietary trading could be easily evaded, and such activity did not play a major role in the crisis. A week after the president delivered his fiery speech, economic adviser Paul Volcker, the architect of the plan, penned a *New York Times* op-ed explaining the prescriptions more coolly and with greater attention to detail. Volcker's vision for reform extends beyond the narrow proposals that Obama announced. The former Fed chairman supports an FDIC-like resolution agency with the power to liquidate or merge large firms on the verge of collapse. Again, the details are crucial: Such an agency must be prohibited from placing failed firms on permanent life support, as the chief regulator for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac has done with them. But if the agency's power were narrowly constrained, it would reintroduce to the market what has become a foreign concept: the prospect of failure and the brake on risk-taking it provides.

■ Academic journals are not free from political pressure—as the Climategate e-mails revealed, global-warming enthusiasts have a penchant for ousting journal editors who run skeptical papers. Apparently, however, even well-policed journals do not provide enough evidence to buttress every facet of the case for apocalyptic, man-caused climate change. In its 2007 Working Group II report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) argued that the loss of mountain ice in the Andes, the Alps, and Africa is related to global warming. To support this claim, the panel cited two sources. One was a dissertation by a Swiss geography student who interviewed mountain guides from the Alps, the

Fiscal Relativity

THERE was an interesting dispute between Karl Rove and David Axelrod in January. Rove, the erstwhile Bush adviser, wrote in the *Washington Post* that Democrats "will run up more debt by October than Bush did in eight years." Axelrod responded to this assertion with a strident broadside, writing that "of all the claims Rove made, one in particular caught my eye for its sheer audacity and shamelessness." He added, "There's an old saying that everyone is entitled to his own opinions, but not his own facts. The next time Karl Rove would like to offer us some advice, I'd urge him to take that to heart." Axelrod went on to indict the Bush administration as the worst deficit criminals in history.

Which gentleman is better supported by the facts? The nearby chart sheds some light on the question.

For a budget guru, there are two ways to score a presidency. The first—identified on the chart as "debt added"—would be simply to take the national debt when a president leaves office and subtract from it the national debt that existed when the president took office. The difference, by definition, is the debt that was added on that president's watch.

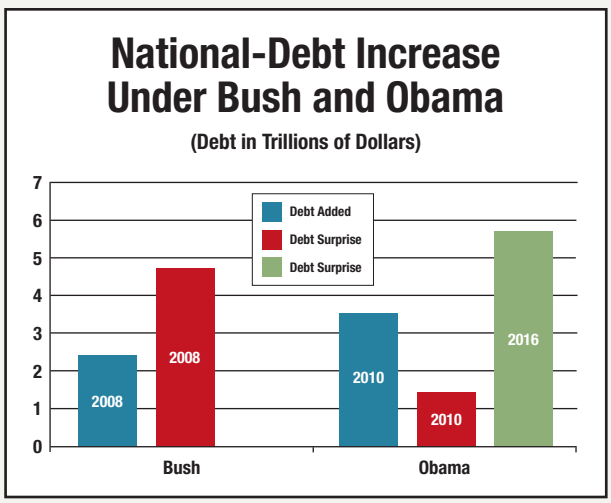
The second method—on the chart, "debt surprise"—would be to compare the debt that exists when a president leaves office with the debt that nonpartisan forecasters at the Congressional Budget Office projected would exist eight years after the president took office.

As can be seen in the first two bars in the chart, for Bush, the two methods give strikingly different answers. In 2001, when he took office, the CBO projected that there would be large surpluses in 2008 and that the national debt would decline steadily. Those surpluses never appeared, in part because of Bush's profligate spending and tax cuts and in part because hopes of economic growth were disappointed. The sum of money that the U.S. owed to all lenders increased on Bush's watch by almost $5 trillion more than the CBO expected in 2001. But since the CBO started with a forecasted surplus, the actual increase in U.S. debt was much smaller, a bit more than $2 trillion.

When Obama took office, the CBO already knew that the economy was terrible, so it projected large deficits. The national debt has increased by more than expected, but only by $1.47 trillion more. The absolute increase in the debt over that same time, however, was a whopping $3.5 trillion. So if you think that presidents should be scored by what actually happened, Rove wins. If you think they should be scored relative to expectation, Axelrod does.

The final bar in the chart, however, might quiet any celebration in the West Wing. For effect, Rove compared eight years of Bush with two years of Obama. An apples-to-apples comparison would roll Obama's policies forward for a hypothetical eight years, and compare that record to Bush's. By that metric, Axelrod loses the argument either way.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



SOURCE: CBO, OMB. OBAMA "DEBT ADDED" FIGURE IS ACCORDING TO THE CBO ESTIMATE FOR THE END OF THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR.

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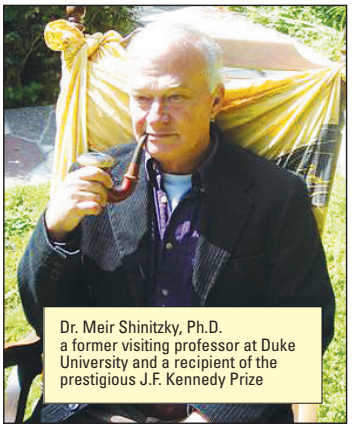
Scientist's brain-boosting "miracle" discovery reverses up to 4 years of memory loss!



Dr. Meir Shinitzky, Ph.D.
a former visiting professor at Duke University and a recipient of the prestigious J.F. Kennedy Prize

Steve Wexford, Staff Reporter

You can't remember where you left your keys. You draw a blank on the names of people you've known for years. You even get lost when driving your car.

It's called age-related memory loss. And if you're one of the millions of Americans who suffer from it, a new scientific discovery promises to dramatically change your life. Using the latest advances in biotechnology, scientists have developed *Lipogen PS* (**phosphatidylserine**) a breakthrough formula with a core ingredient so powerful, so effective, it has stunned and excited scientists all over the world.

Meir Shinitzky, Ph.D. one of the world's leading experts in the physiology and function of brain cell membranes, says it not only works, but works faster than anyone had dreamed possible. "*Lipogen PS* is a proprietary, state-of-the-art fusion of natural compounds that's ***'pure memory fuel'*** for aging brains. In just 90 days, you'll actually feel more alert, absorb new information faster, and recall it with much less effort."

TURN BACK THE HANDS OF TIME

Like graying hair, memory problems are a normal part of aging. But other factors like alcohol, cigarettes, even emotional stress can affect your memory. That's why you can't remember names, can't find your keys, or can't concentrate like you did when you were younger.

Until now, nothing could be done to reverse this trend. "But thanks to ***Lipogen PS Plus***, virtually everyone with age-related memory problems can be helped," says Dr. Shinitzky.

Phosphatidylserine
"Locks in Fading Memories"

2 KEYS TO A BETTER MEMORY

Scientists have long known about the memory-boosting powers of phosphatidylserine and the vital role it plays in cognitive function. Unfortunately as you age, vital brain nutrients diminish and brain cells begin to malfunction. As a result, your memory and mental abilities suffer dramatically.

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In a double-blind clinical trial, researchers administered phosphatidylserine to 149 men and women suffering from age-related memory loss. After three months, some of the subjects had their memory problems reversed by a full 4 years!

In another study, test subjects were noticeably sharper and they could remember more. But doctors noticed an added benefit. The mood of the test group was more upbeat and happier than the other group who took only the placebo.

What's more, the phosphatidylserine in *Lipogen PS Plus* also helps you fight the rise in cortisol levels that often cause fatigue, depression and wild mood swings. The results published in the International Journal on the Biology of Stress (Volume 7, no.2), showed phosphatidylserine helps you stay calm and relaxed, even in stressful situations.

In both Europe and the U.S. the key ingredient in Lipogen PS Plus proved to boost memory, rev-up recall, improve the retention of information and even elevate your mood. The results were so sensational, they were reported by the most prestigious medical journals.

Phosphatidylserine is the ONLY natural brain health compound with an FDA "qualified health" claim for effectiveness.

PS is the ONLY brain support compound with a qualified health claim for effectiveness

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After two or three weeks, Linda R., of West Virginia, noticed she was remembering things, even if they weren't very important. "I'm also more alert and able to concentrate. Hooray!"

Linda H., a 51-year-old from Flowery Branch, GA started taking the formula and "in approximately two months, I recognized a distinct difference in my memory and mental acuity. Now, my mind is razor sharp!"

"Lipogen PS helps give you back a robust memory so you'll never again feel upstaged by people half your age," adds Dr. Shinitzky.

SAFE AND EASY TO DIGEST

The easy-to-swallow capsules are all-natural, well-tolerated and have no reported side effects. Lipogen PS Plus starts working in just 30 minutes.

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Call now and you can experience the amazing memory-boosting power of Lipogen PS Plus with no risk or obligation. You'll be able to think faster, remember more, and feel happier than you have in years -- or it won't cost you a single penny.

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(CENACCHI, ET AL, COGNITIVE DECLINE IN THE ELDERLY: A DOUBLE-BLIND, PLACEBO-CONTROLLED MULTI-CENTER STUDY OF EFFICACY OF PHOSPHATIDYLSERINE ADMINISTRATION. AGING (CLIN. EXP. RES.), 1993, 5:123-33) "MODELS ARE USED IN ALL PHOTOS TO PROTECT PRIVACY" THESE STATEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN REVIEWED OR EVALUATED BY THE FDA. THIS PRODUCT IS NOT INTENDED TO DIAGNOSE, TREAT, CURE OR PREVENT ANY DISEASE. RESULTS MAY VARY. LIPOGEN PS IS NOT A MEDICINE BUT IF YOU HAVE A CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITION SUCH AS DIABETES, HYPERTENSION OR HEART DISEASE, BE SURE TO CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING THIS OR ANY SUPPLEMENT. DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS MAY NOT BE RISK-FREE UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

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other an anecdotal article in a climbing magazine. Other problems with the report abound: It cited 16 non-peer-reviewed reports by the World Wildlife Fund, an environmentalist group. It claimed the Himalayan glaciers would be gone by 2035, an estimate the IPCC now admits is off by centuries. It included a graph purporting to show that global warming causes extreme weather in the U.S., but the data in the graph did not come from peer-reviewed sources. These blunders may imply little about the existence or non-existence of anthropogenic global warming, but they say volumes about the trustworthiness of the IPCC.

■ The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2009, for the first time, more than half of American union members worked for the government. No surprise there, with private employment plunging while government continues as the nation's premier growth industry. Working for the government is a sweet gig; not only will your employer never go out of business, but if the elections turn out right, you get to choose your boss—for example, Hilda Solis, Obama's union-approved secretary of labor, who agrees that the falling percentage of private union members reveals a problem. Is that problem the never-ending expansion of the federal civilian work force, which will grow by more than 10 percent this year? The sickly economy, with its disincentives for businesses to hire new employees? Not a chance. "These numbers show a need for Congress to pass legislation to level the playing field to enable more American workers to access the benefits of union membership," Solis said. "This report makes clear why the administration supports the Employee Free Choice Act [i.e., card check]."

■ Attorney general Eric Holder has been on a one-man campaign to discredit the Obama administration's legalistic approach to the War on Terror. Holder decided to try KSM in New York City, and someone high up in his Justice department—probably Holder himself—ordered that would-be Christmas bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab get a *Miranda* warning shortly after his capture. The New York trial has now collapsed in a heap, after city officials realized that making Lower Manhattan an armed camp for years in order to try a man the president of the United States has already condemned as guilty would be expensive, disruptive, and senseless. The administration is hunting for another venue in the U.S., but it should ditch the civilian trial entirely. We have already spent a fortune to make Gitmo the ideal location for the military-commission trials Congress has authorized. As for Abdulmutallab, he readily chatted to custom officials and the FBI after his attempted act of mass murder—until he was Mirandized and, predictably, shut up. Press reports say he is talking again, but it was foolhardy not to designate him an enemy combatant and subject him to intensive interrogation immediately, as even national intelligence director Dennis Blair has admitted. The best way to discredit counterterrorism-as-law-enforcement turns out to be to put it into practice.

■ Here's the thing about missile-defense systems: It sure is nice to have them when you need them. In recent months, the United States has upgraded its anti-ballistic capabilities in the Persian Gulf region, with an eye toward containing Iran. Patriot-missile batteries are now on alert in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, and Aegis missile-defense cruisers patrol the waters nearby. This deployment protects against short-range attacks. Yet Iran also wants to develop longer-range threats that can target Europe and, eventually, North America. The Obama administration has cut back on plans to counter these ambitions with interceptors in Poland and elsewhere. As a result, when we face an urgent need for those missile-defense systems, we may not have them.

■ Britain's official inquiry into the causes of the Iraq War expresses the isolationism and self-hatred of Britain at decade's end: The war was concocted by Bush and enabled by Tony Blair, who should be tried as a war criminal. On January 29 Blair testified on his own behalf. Saddam, he said, was arming and dangerous. "Given his use of chemical weapons, given the over 1 million people whose deaths he had caused, given ten years of breaking U.N. resolutions, could we take the risk of this man reconstituting his weapons program? . . . The crucial thing after September 11 is that the calculus of risk changed. . . . If [the] people inspired by this religious fanaticism could have killed 30,000, they would have." Blair told President Bush, "We are going to be with you in confronting and dealing with this threat"—by U.N. resolutions, preferably, though France and Russia scotched that; by war if necessary. If he had not acted, "we would be facing a situation where Iraq was competing with Iran . . . on nuclear-weapons capability [and in] support of terrorist groups." Tony Blair is a man of many flaws, but this was a necessary defense of his finest hour.

The best way to discredit counterterrorism-as-law-enforcement turns out to be to put it into practice.

■ The recent execution of Ali Hassan al-Majid brings Iraq that much closer to coming to terms with its dreadful past. In normal circumstances, al-Majid, a particularly vicious and uneducated man, would have been able to terrorize only those on his small-town turf. But he was Saddam Hussein's first cousin and crony, and as such promoted to posts that left the whole of Iraq at his mercy. These like-minded accomplices ran a regime in which no crime was ever too extreme so long as they kept power. Al-Majid liked to boast about his gassing of Iraqi Kurds, which killed some 5,000 of them and destroyed the health of thousands more. "Who is going to say anything?" he asked sarcastically on the eve of the atrocity. "The international community?" This chemical attack against civilians earned him the grim sobriquet "Chemical Ali." He also specialized in repressing the rebellions that regularly broke out against Saddam Hussein. A video exists showing him brutalizing tied-up prisoners and personally shooting other captives with his revolver. In answer to one charge of ordering the death of the entire village of Dujail, he said, "I am not defending myself, I am not apologizing. I did not make a mistake." By the

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end of the judicial process he had received four sentences of death for crimes against humanity, and most Iraqis evidently wished for justice to be done by hanging him as many times.

■ With a pre-trial hearing in January, the Dutch government opened its case against parliamentarian Geert Wilders, head of the libertarian-conservative Party for Freedom. The full-dress trial will begin later this year. The charges against Wilders allege that he incited discrimination and hatred, and furthermore "intentionally offended a group of people, i.e. Muslims, based on their religion." If convicted, Wilders faces two years in prison and heavy fines. A central point is Wilders's comparisons of the Koran to *Mein Kampf*, the latter currently banned in the Netherlands. For speaking of Islam as a murderous, intolerant religion, Wilders has received countless death threats, is under 24-hour police protection, and is obliged to sleep in an assortment of secret locations under armed guard. The political, judicial, and academic establishments of the Netherlands, like those of other Western nations, are sunk deep in "diversity" authoritarianism. Instead of hunting down Geert Wilders's persecutors, the authorities have joined forces with them. There may be a political reckoning at hand, though: Polls show that Wilders's party could now be the most popular in the Netherlands. The nation that gave birth to Erasmus, Grotius, and Spinoza may yet have some lessons to teach the world.

■ Whatever is going on in the case of Abdelbeset Ali al-Megrahi? He is the Libyan found guilty of blowing up Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people. Last August, the Scottish authorities announced that he was suffering from terminal cancer and had no more than three months to live. At that very moment, al-Megrahi's lawyers were claiming to have new evidence that showed him to be innocent, as he had always claimed to be, and they had won the right to appeal. A deal was struck whereby al-Megrahi was freed in return for dropping this appeal. With much sentimental talk about allowing him to go home to die, al-Megrahi was flown to Libya on a private jet sent by his boss, Moammar Qaddafi. And there he has gone to ground. Three months have now extended to six. Either Scottish doctors are unable to diagnose cancer properly, or those with the disease ought to visit Libya promptly for a cure.

■ In Haiti, after the earthquake, no country except the United States did more than Israel. It sent a delegation of about 235, which searched the rubble and set up a field hospital. According to one report, this delegation "treated more than 1,100 patients, conducted 319 successful surgeries, delivered 16 babies including three Caesarean sections, and saved many from the ruins." And the team left behind more than 30 tons of medical equipment and supplies. It is remarkable that this tiny Middle Eastern nation—with more than enough problems of its own—should have cared so much about a woebegone people in the faraway Caribbean. Unfortunately, Israel has ample experience in disaster relief, having been bombed and terrorized incessantly. In 2003, Iran suffered a terrible earthquake, which killed more than 25,000 people. The Israelis wanted to come immediately and rescue those they could. But Iran refused. Better to die than to suffer the ignominy of being saved by Jews. This is an indication of the psychosis besetting the Middle East. Fortunately, Haiti, for all its problems, does not have that.

■ The proprietor of a small business in England wanted to post an ad for an $11-an-hour cleaning position at the local "Jobcentre," which is to say, government-run employment exchange. She was surprised to be told that the ad could not be displayed. Why not? Because it specified that applicants for the position "must be very reliable and hard-working." This, the exchange told her, might open them to lawsuits for discrimination against unreliable workers. To call someone "discriminating" ("careful or fastidious in selection"—*Webster's Third*) used to be a form of praise. Nowadays it connotes thoughtcrime, even when the trait being discriminated against is undesirable.

■ Focus on the Family, the evangelical Christian group, bought air time to run an ad during the Super Bowl. In the ad, Florida Gators quarterback Tim Tebow will reportedly praise his mother for ignoring the advice of her doctors to abort him. NOW and NARAL urged CBS not to run the ad. But why? The advance publicity does not suggest that the ad says anything about how governments should treat abortion. It advocates neither the end nor the continuation of legal abortion. It merely seeks to influence people who have the power to choose life. Organizations that object can rightly be described as pro-abortion rather than pro-choice.

■ *Sports Illustrated* decided to honor "10 memorable acts of sportsmanship from the 2000s." One was an act by an Ohio high-school student, a golfer, who had won the state tournament. But he had signed an incorrect scorecard—and he brought this to the attention of officials. It cost him the tournament, as signing an incorrect scorecard means instant disqualification. All honor to the student, Adam Van Houten, and to *Sports Illustrated* for honoring his act: sportsmanship, indeed. He brings to mind Bobby Jones, who called a penalty on himself in the '25 Open, probably costing himself the championship. Praised for this, Jones would have none of it: "You may as well praise a man for not robbing a bank."

■ Rolling Stones guitarist and actuarial puzzle Keith Richards has gone off the sauce. It didn't take wild horses, only the spectacle of Keef's former bandmate Ronnie Wood's deteriorating very publicly into serious alcohol addiction. Let us hope that Wood does not revel too much in being the rare man dissipated enough to scare straight rock and roll's poster drunk. With any luck, Richards's rehabilitation will be an example to those fans whom he seduced into imitating his indulgent lifestyle; with special luck, he will be an example to Wood. Richards has our congratulations.

GREG BAKER/AP

■ How strange to think, as the critic Terry Teachout observed, that Louis Auchincloss and J. D. Salinger were such near contemporaries. Auchincloss was an old friend of WFB's. But then, he was an old friend of everyone in the upper crust of New York, not only or even primarily because of his celebrity as a writer, but because of his birth into the brownstone aristocracy that was his subject. He seemed to inhabit Edith Wharton's world, and

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indeed knew her family. Auchincloss's novels suffered from the same flaw: When in doubt, he introduced a new narrator—a sign that his true métier was the short story. He must have heard a million of them in his long life as a lawyer and diner-out, and he refashioned them into vignettes of his class and time. J. D. Salinger's world abutted Auchincloss's—the hero of *The Catcher in the Rye* is a prep-school student—but he treated it very differently. Holden Caulfield was unhappy and inarticulate, the original rebel without a clue. Unfortunately he was embraced as the symbol of an age group. Even dark fiction once gave young readers something to aspire to. Caulfield left them with their sometimes tender, always ineffectual feelings: a pernicious legacy. Salinger enacted his hero's funk, retiring to the womb of a cabin in New Hampshire, and assorted food manias. The lawyer died at age 92, the recluse at age 91. R.I.P.

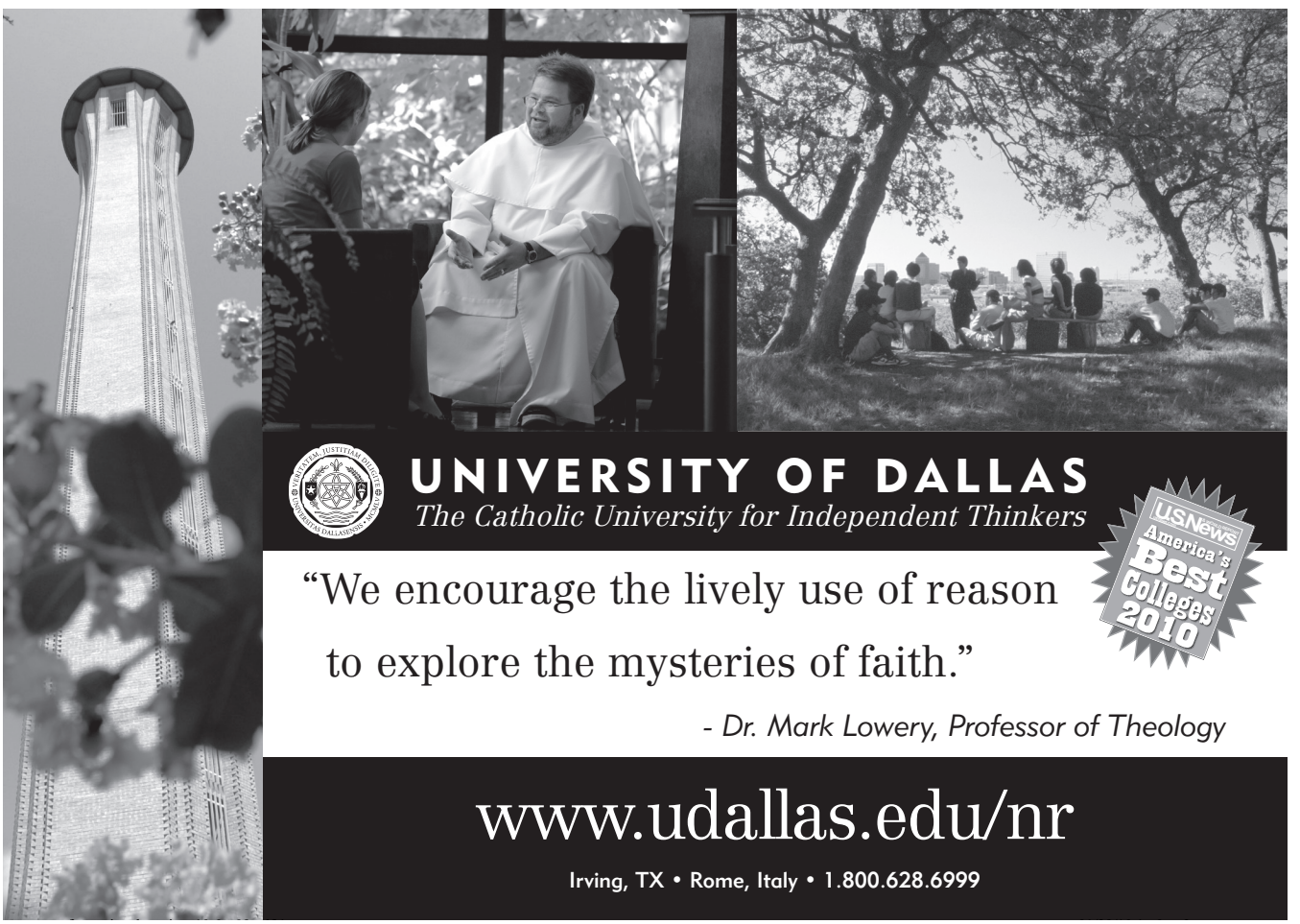
■ Howard Zinn was a historian who rose to fame and fortune by turning heroes into villains. Columbus wasn't an intrepid explorer, but a bringer of genocide—and so on, ad nauseam. His signature book, *A People's History of the United States*, sold millions. It became required reading on many campuses. It was also a piece of unabashed leftist agitprop (as Roger Kimball explains in detail on page 29). "I wanted my writing of history and my teaching of history to be a part of the social struggle," he once said. "History itself is a political act." Honest historians may have viewpoints, rooted in fact and argument, even to the point of revisionism. Zinn, by contrast, pushed an agenda. In his mind, capitalism always exploited and America always oppressed. On January 27, he became just another dead white male. R.I.P.

POLITICS

Statist Quo

EVERYTHING changes except President Obama. His agenda doesn't change. As his State of the Union address demonstrated, he has had no second thoughts about the wisdom of his health-care policies, or any of his policies; resistance is always and only a reason for redoubling. Also unchanging is the condescension with which he articulates his agenda: He faulted himself for not explaining health care well enough to the easily confused American public. The same familiar straw men dot the landscape of his rhetoric. (Republicans want to "maintain the status quo" on health care. This president is willing to listen to Republican ideas, just so long as he can then forget that he has ever done so.) Narcissism, too, is a constant companion. The opening of the speech, and the end, invited us to regard Obama as the embodiment of the nation. But it is not the country's future that has suddenly come under doubt. It is his administration's. It is not the country's spirit that is in danger of breaking. It is contemporary liberalism's.

"Let's try common sense," said the president. For Obama, common sense tells us that expanding Medicaid is the way to reduce the deficit. That increasing the price of energy is the way to create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jobs. That further socializing medicine is the way to stay ahead of India. Nothing in his speech suggested that the government's most important economic task might be to create the context of stability in which growth can occur. (Perhaps that thought would have interfered with the theme of "change.") Beyond a pro forma sentence, nothing in the speech suggested that any positive economic trend could ever take hold without a direct assist from the federal government. Without its help, firms wouldn't export or get credit. The proposal to forgive student-loan debt on special terms for people who go into "public service" typifies this administration's attitude toward the economy: Producing wealth is less noble than rearranging it. On one of the country's true economic challenges, runaway entitlement spending, Obama punted to a commission.

The president's foreign-policy remarks were both perfunctory and otherworldly. Bringing our resources and our ideals into balance is always the difficulty in American foreign policy. Obama resolved the tension by pretending that he had consistently favored democrats and freedom fighters the world over. In Iran, in Cuba, in China, his actual policy has been the reverse.

Anyone could find something to agree with in an endless speech, and we will dutifully applaud the president's professed desire for new nuclear plants. All in all, though, our impression was of an administration that has no real understanding of the political straits in which it finds itself, and thus no way to escape them.

PUBLIC POLICY

The Bucks Don't Stop

FEDERAL fiscal policy has run completely off the rails. Budgetary pressures have been building for decades because of unconstrained entitlement spending and Washington's unchecked appetite for ever more activist government—and Obama's budget proposes nothing to resolve those fundamental problems. Instead, the president announced a gimmicky "freeze" in spending that affects only a very small part of the federal budget: non-defense discretionary spending. Which is to say, it is a spending freeze that does not freeze spending. The real problems—unsustainable entitlements and the growing scope of federal activity—either remain unaddressed or are exacerbated by the president's desire to enact a huge new entitlement under a national health-care bureaucracy.

The president's main line of political self-defense has been: "Don't blame me—it was a mess when I got here." That's a timid sort of leadership. George W. Bush made a bold and thankless effort to begin the essential process of entitlement reform, starting with Social Security, and was pilloried by Obama's party for his efforts. Even as they blame every problem on the preceding administration, neither President Obama nor his Democratic colleagues in Congress contemplate anything one-tenth as meaningful as Bush's entitlement efforts, settling for a largely symbolic tweak here and there: $20 billion in purported savings out of a $3.6 trillion budget.

And here's what Obama's dodging the difficult work at hand will cost us: According to his own budget, the federal deficit for 2010 is expected to reach nearly $1.6 trillion, a record. And that would come on top of a $1.4 trillion deficit in 2009 and before a $1.3 trillion deficit in 2011. Between 1789 and 2008, the U.S. government borrowed a total of $5.8 trillion. But in just the first three years of the Obama administration, the government is set to borrow $4.4 trillion. And that would not be the end of it. If the Obama budget is adopted in full, federal borrowing will top $18 trillion by 2020. Over the period 2011 to 2020, the president's plan is to run deficits totaling an astounding $8.5 trillion.

TIM SLOAN/AP

In 2008, total spending stood at nearly $3 trillion—not exactly a period of austerity. But Obama wants to take the swelling juggernaut he inherited and supersize it. Under his budget, government spending would reach $5.7 trillion by 2020, driven heavily by mounting entitlement costs. Spending on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid alone would nearly double over a decade, going from $1.4 trillion in 2009 to $2.6 trillion in 2020.

Even without the health-care plan, so excessive is this spending that the massive tax increases Obama plans will not stanch the flood of red ink. And they are indeed massive: According to Republican staff on the Senate Budget Committee, the tax hikes already in the Obama budget exceed $2.3 trillion over ten years. If he gets health care locked in, the president plans to solicit Republican cooperation in passing a further massive tax hike to help pay for it and his other spending. The specific form of this hike remains unknown, as it would be proposed by an independent commission of "wise men" handpicked mainly by Democrats to ensure a predetermined outcome—one they hope is not covered in Democratic fingerprints. For added electoral protection, the commission's tax-increase recommendations would not be unveiled and voted on by Congress until after the November elections, all the better to keep the nuisance of public opinion from interfering with the grand Democratic plan to pursue another Great Society.

Add to the bill some $800 billion in new levies from "cap and trade" and about $500 billion in taxes from the health-care plan. Which is to say, rather than hit the fiscal brakes and address the entitlement crisis, the president proposes to create another runaway entitlement program and "pay for it" with new taxes and with Medicare cuts that will never actually be enacted, but instead postponed and ignored by Congress—as such proposals have been, consistently, for years.

It is true that President Obama did not create the entitlement-spending problem, but neither did George W. Bush—and Obama might consult President Truman's notes to remind himself exactly where the buck stops.

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The Not-So-Great Communicator

Obama has failed to connect because he never paid his dues

BY ROB LONG

POSSIBLY the three scariest words in the English language are, "Can we talk?"

Nothing good can come of that invitation. Certainly not what seems to be indicated, which is a gentle kind of give-and-take.

"Can we talk?" almost always means, "Can you shut up and listen?" But as a rule, we tend to shy away from the bluntly honest and prefer sunny euphemisms like "engage in dialogue" and "have a good conversation" and "communicate effectively" to mask what's really going on: You sit, you listen, end of conversation.

Not that this is always a bad thing. Sometimes life makes you the talker, sometimes life makes you the talked-at. We've all done our share of both. The key, as any married person will tell you, is to know when it's time to start talking and when it's time to shut up and listen.

It works the same in public life. Here's a little show-business tip, for the next time you find yourself onstage, in front of a large crowd: When you've said something funny or striking, wait until the audience's laughter or applause crests, and then start talking again. Don't wait for the laughter to fade; don't milk the last clap. Start talking again the moment their response seems just past its peak.

It's counterintuitive, I know—your natural impulse is going to be to soak up all the adulation you can, to squeeze every last drop of that audience love—but trust me here: It's smart audience management. You keep the speech moving. You keep moving from popular topic to popular topic. And more important, you send a clear message to your listeners that you're in charge—that the pace and tempo of your speech are under your control—and that you're not afraid to push them around a little. And let's be honest: Every successful public speaker knows how important it is to make his audience sit up and beg.

For almost two years, Barack Obama's passionate acolytes on the hustings and in the media have been doing just that: sitting up, tongues out, tails wagging, begging for it. They've sat silently, drooling, as he spent the past twelve months giving interviews and speeches, "communicating" and "engaging in dialogue" and whatever other weasel words they came up with for trying to sell an increasingly skeptical public on a massive new government entitlement program with no believable method to pay for it.

He is, we all know, a remarkably eloquent man. His speeches thrill listeners; his cadences rock the house; people get chills; that sort of thing. And it's the most boring piece of conventional wisdom to suggest that now, finally, the Left has its own version of "the Great Communicator."

That Barack Obama, law-school teacher's pet and professional gasbag, has convinced his fans on the left that he "communicates" well, that he's another Reagan masterfully connecting with the deep-seated values and concerns of his audience, is all you need to know to explain the punch-drunk look on the faces of Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, and the rest of the Obama Rat Pack as they face the inconceivable: a president whose popularity is plummeting, and a party facing a robust thrashing in November.

Ronald Reagan wasn't born the Great Communicator. He earned that title, over some pretty lean years, by hitting the road, making speeches, meeting people in unfashionable places, and eating disgusting banquet food. He would deliver a speech a day sometimes, to receptive audiences and not-so-receptive ones. He was cheered and booed and had good nights and bad nights—in other words, when he faced American television viewers in 1980 to run for president, he knew his audience. He had met them. In person. Where they lived, and gathered, and worshipped, and ate chicken dinners, and he knew what they cared about and didn't care about. He knew how not to irritate them or, worse, bore them. It may seem like a trivial or superficial point, but there's something exhausting and tedious about Barack Obama's voice these days—he keeps talking, but he's not hearing his audience start to shuffle out there in the dark, check their voicemail, finish their coffee, look at their watch, and head for the door. What kind of Great Communicator is that?

When unpopular, brittle Hillary Clinton decided to run for senator from New York, she didn't go out on a speaking tour. She went out on something she called a "Listening Tour"—she hit the road, went to pancake breakfasts, sat in school auditoriums, did a whole barrel of things that were quite un–Hillary Clinton–like, all to earn her place at the podium.

We Americans prefer our politicians with a little stink on them. We like to see them eating bad barbeque and praying with people in bad suits. Political campaigns are a hazing ritual—the system is designed to weed out the snobs and the bores and to ensure that any soul who makes it through the bus rides and the

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town halls knows exactly what the deal is: Before you get to talk, you must shut up and listen.

Every now and then, though, someone slips through the system.

In show-business terms—and is there a better way, really, to analyze and understand American politics?—Obama made a rookie mistake. He let the applause die out. He didn't keep the speech moving. He could have easily hopscotched along—alternating big-ticket entitlement initiatives with some smart centrist window-dressing—and ended up in a much stronger place.

Imagine, for instance, an alternative first-year plan: Obama announces a major health-care-reform initiative, garners the left-wing applause, then cleverly withdraws to allow the House and Senate to make the sausage. Meanwhile, he noisily endorses the get-tough-on-teachers stance of his secretary of education, Arne Duncan, to applause from a different part of the audience. Then, boldly, he announces a stimulus package in the form of a payroll-tax cut—something that would disproportionately benefit the working class—to baffled and stunned applause from tax-cut-loving right-wing nuts (like me) and a good piece of the tea-party crowd, all in time to circle back to health care and get his public option. He'd be looking at a first year of successes: blunting the opposition to his far-left agenda with an adroit tax cut, a giant step toward socialized medicine, and more important, the sense that the country was being led by a smart, canny, gifted politician.

Instead, this was his first year: a fat, greasy mess of a stimulus package, which has failed by any measure; political humiliation in Virginia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts; an energized and giddy opposition; a demoralized and mutinous Democratic party; and the worst possible outcome in show business: standing at the podium, alone, listening to the deafening sound that an auditorium makes when the applause dies out.

His audience once sat up in rapt attention, begging and drooling, but now sniffs at the ground, scratching itself in confusion, wondering what was so wrong about Hillary Clinton back in 2008. And the rest of us are sitting out here in the dark, in the silence, ready to stand up to the empty, exhausted suit in front of us and shout, "Hey, Obama, can we talk?" NR

'Not True'

With its Citizens United *decision, the Supreme Court struck a blow for free speech*

BY SHANNEN W. COFFIN

From all of the uproar surrounding the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, you would think that an activist Court had excised the Bill of Rights from the Constitution. New York senator Charles Schumer said that the Court had "predetermined the winners of next November's election. It won't be the Republican or the Democrats and it won't be the American people; it will be Corporate America." The *New York Times* editorialized that the Court had "thrust politics back to the robber-baron era of the 19th century." Never one to shy away from hyperbole, MSNBC's Keith Olbermann claimed that the Roberts Court had let Chief Justice Roger Taney—one of the great scoundrels of Supreme Court history for his decision invalidating the Missouri Compromise—"off the hook." *Citizens United*, Mr. Olbermann growled, "might actually have more dire implications than *Dred Scott v. Sandford*."

Olbermann's commentary suggests that the Supreme Court willfully disregarded fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution. But the opposite is true. *Citizens United* actually protected the First Amendment right to engage in core political speech concerning federal elections, whether the speaker is an individual or a corporation. And it is doubtful that *Citizens United* will lead the country down the path to a second civil war, so Taney's ignominious legacy seems safe.

In a 5–4 decision authored by Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, the Court struck down as inconsistent with the First Amendment a federal election law that prohibits corporate and union "electioneering communications"—defined as broadcast communications within 30 days of a primary election or 60 days of a general election that clearly refer to a candidate for federal office. In so holding, the Court affirmed a longstanding principle—anathema to the Left—that "political speech does not lose First Amendment protection 'simply because its source is a corporation.'" As Justice Kennedy reasoned: "When Government seeks to use its full power, including the criminal law, to command where a person may get his or her information or what distrusted source he or she may not hear, it uses censorship to control thought." Such restrictions may not override "the freedom to think for ourselves."

Outrage from liberals culminated in President Obama's State of the Union address, during which he chided the Supreme Court for reversing "a century of law" and opening "the floodgates for special interests, including foreign corporations, to spend without limit in our elections." Justice Samuel Alito, sitting in the audience, shook his head and mouthed the words "Not true."

Obama's suggestion that the Court had set aside a century of law was accompanied by complaints from several Democratic senators that Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Alito had strayed from promises made in their confirmation hearings that they would respect precedent—promises exacted in the hope of fossilizing decisions such as *Roe v. Wade* that are cherished by the Left. If the decision had, in fact, thrown out 100 years of settled law, those claims might have had a basis. But no less an authority than Linda Greenhouse, former Supreme Court reporter for the *New York Times*, dismissed the president's criticism, noting that the century-old law prohibiting direct corporate contributions to federal candidates is still on the books and was not affected by *Citizens United*.

Citizens United did overturn, at least in part, a pair of more recent Supreme Court decisions, but these date only to 1990 and 2003. In *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce*, the Court, for the first time in its history, supported restrictions on independent corporate expenditures made in connection with elections. This 1991 decision upheld a state law prohibiting any corporation from spending funds on

Mr. Coffin is a partner in the Washington, D.C., law firm Steptoe & Johnson LLP. As a Justice Department official in the Bush administration, he participated in the defense of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act in McConnell v. FEC. *This article is part of his penance.*

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advertising in support of a candidate for state office. Based on that decision, in 2003, a closely divided Court upheld, in *McConnell v. Federal Election Commission*, the very "electioneering communications" ban challenged by Citizens United.

Neither *Austin* nor *McConnell* could claim a mantle of firmly established precedent placing it beyond re-examination by the current Court. Indeed, Justices Kennedy and Scalia dissented in both cases, arguing that the decisions were inconsistent with Supreme Court precedent affirming the First Amendment right of corporations to participate in the political process. In its 1978 decision in *First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti*, the Supreme Court invalidated a Massachusetts law that prohibited corporate expenditures intended to influence any state ballot referendum not materially related to the corporation's business interests. *Bellotti* unequivocally held that the discussion of public affairs, whether by an individual or a corporation, lies at the heart of the First Amendment. The *Bellotti* Court reasoned that the government may no more tell a business to "stick to business" than it may tell religious, charitable, or civic associations to stick to their own businesses when addressing the public. *Citizens United* merely realigned First Amendment law with *Bellotti*'s protection of the political speech of both individuals and associations of individuals in a corporation.

What of President Obama's claim that *Citizens United* opens the floodgates to foreign corporate influence over federal elections? It is simply untrue. *Citizens United* invalidated a single provision of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act prohibiting independent corporate and union expenditures in connection with a federal election. It left in place the prohibition on direct corporate contributions to federal candidates. A separate, undisturbed statute prohibits foreign corporations from involving themselves in federal elections through direct contributions to or independent expenditures for or against federal candidates. The statute also forbids these foreign corporations to do indirectly what they are prohibited from doing directly. And, lest there be any doubt, Federal Election Commission regulations prohibit any foreign corporation from "directly or indirectly" participating in the decision-making process of any U.S. corporation concerning its federal-election-related activities. In short, current law, unaffected by the *Citizens United* decision, already prohibits a foreign corporation from seeking to influence U.S. elections, either directly or through a U.S.-based subsidiary.

More important, the Court explicitly said that it was not addressing the question of whether the government has a compelling interest in preventing foreign influence over our political process, and nothing in the decision could be read to bless such influence. The government certainly has a much stronger interest in preventing foreign influence than in preventing citizens from pooling their resources to speak through a corporation about public issues, and the corrupting influence of the former is much more apparent than that of the latter.

The irony in the Left's outrage at *Citizens United* is that the decision protects some of the most powerful liberal voices. The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, MSNBC, and other mainstream media outlets are no less corporate in nature than Citizens United, which had sought to produce and distribute *Hillary*: *The Movie* during the 2008 primary-election cycle and been barred from doing so. Given their sheer size, one might argue that these companies pose a greater threat of distortion to federal elections than a grassroots nonprofit corporation. The reasoning that would prohibit Citizens United from distributing an anti-Hillary documentary on the eve of a primary election could also prohibit the *New York Times* editorial page from endorsing a candidate in a presidential election.

To date, Congress has expressly exempted the mass media's editorializing from election-speech bans, but the First Amendment would not prevent Congress from lifting those exemptions if the critics of *Citizens United* had their way. It is doubtful that the same editorial boards that have criticized *Citizens United* would laud a decision upholding restrictions on their right to opine in the waning days of a campaign, when their endorsements might have the greatest impact. Fortunately, the Court's decision does not leave to politicians the decision of where the line between legitimate and to draw illegitimate speech or speaker.

If there's one truth in Washington, it is that money will find its way into an election. Though designed to lessen the influence of "special interests," the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act spawned well-lawyered workarounds. It gave rise to "527" organizations such as MoveOn.org and Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, which kept the spigot of special-interest funds open. In the 2004 election cycle, a mere 24 individuals contributed $142 million to such groups. And despite the prohibition of electioneering contributions from unions, labor's money also continued to flow to campaigns through union political action committees and get-out-the-vote drives. The Service Employees International Union alone spent more than $85 million in the 2008 cycle. In a video commemorating the Obama administration's first hundred days, its president bragged that "SEIU is on the field, it's in the White House, it's in the administration."

Citizens United won't change that. But it will guarantee that Congress does not decide which voices—big or small, rich or poor—should be favored in federal elections. It may, by its own force, streamline the morass of federal election regulation. And in a battle between more than 500 pages of federal election regulations and these ten simple words—"Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech"—a blow for simplicity is long overdue. **NR**

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The Cut That Heals

Reducing the payroll tax can help save Social Security. Why won't Republicans say so?

BY GEORGE GILDER

For the last ten years or so, I have been urging drastic reductions in the U.S. payroll tax, which funds Social Security. If we want to reduce tax rates without falling into the rhetorical trap of "tax cuts for the rich," then the payroll tax is our best target—and the one that will affect the most employment decisions. Now I am feeling the heat of the herd as bipartisan throngs join me in the cause. An unharmonious choir of politicians and thinkers, most of whom agree on little else, is singing the virtues of cutting the payroll tax. Among them are Clinton labor secretary Robert Reich, Massachusetts miracle Scott Brown, Alaskan rogue Sarah Palin, the American Enterprise Institute's John Makin, economist Russell Roberts of George Mason University, and former Bush advisers Larry Lindsey and Michael Boskin.

Why do I mute my cheers? Because none of these would-be tax cutters articulates the only plausible goal for a payroll-tax rate reduction. What is that? To flood employers with more money to pay wages and hire workers (Boskin)? To help poor and middle-income wage earners make ends meet (Palin)? To diminish the wedge between what employers pay and what workers receive (Lindsey)? To create jobs (Reich)?

None of the above. However desirable each of these goals may be, cutting the payroll tax without cutting spending—or at least reducing spending relative to the output of the economy—means that all the hypothesized revenue to support federal appropriations still comes from the income and output and savings of other employers and employees. If the result of a payroll-tax cut is to deplete available funds for Social Security, it is politically perilous and undesirable. The solution is to be found in a tax cut that is part of an overall pro-growth agenda: one that does not merely address the balances on government accounting ledgers but increases the value of our assets and the output of real goods and services in our economy.

Today, both supporters and critics agree that cutting the tax will reduce funds for retirees at a time when existing funds are barely adequate. According to Roberts, using the $200 billion of unspent TARP funds to cut the payroll tax by 25 percent for the next five years would "reduce revenue by about $250 billion per year." Opposing the same proposal, former supply-sider Bruce Bartlett agrees that a payroll-tax cut "will involve a considerable loss in revenue to the Social Security Trust Fund. He called the proposal "a dreadful idea."

Dreadful indeed is a cut in payroll taxes that will reduce government revenues, jeopardize Social Security, and, under the congressional pay-as-you-go rules, require "compensatory" spending cuts that hurt Republicans and undermine our national defense. Payroll-tax cuts treated as spending cannot achieve the real benefits that tax-cut advocates seek: new and preserved jobs, new small businesses, an expanded economy.

The only reasonable and politically attainable goal of a payroll-tax rate reduction is to get as much real revenue for the government as possible. A tax-rate reduction that increases real government revenues by definition also increases the private sector's share of a larger economy: If rates are down and revenue is up, then taxable earnings must be growing. Everybody wins—except the politicians who oppose it.

The stress is on the word "real," meaning actual goods and services that can enhance the lives of old people. The best way to enhance the lives of old people is to keep them healthy and at work, paying taxes rather than consuming them. But the ongoing debate treats the number of retirees as static, and accumulated accounting balances as tantamount to real support in the future. Accounting balances built up by punishing work and enterprise—as our current tax system does—are the problem, not the solution. Far from enabling future growth and support for the elderly, our current policies merely subsidize retirement with specified numbers of dollars. Recycling these dollars through President Obama's political process will eventually shrink them down to the value of a ticket for a place in line at a government office harboring a lottery "lock box" run by ACORN.

Unless an action today plausibly increases the quality of life for the tsunami of boomer fogeys coming down the demographic pike over the next two decades like the addled throngs on the road to Woodstock in 1969, it is probably both destructive and politically unsupportable. This generation is going to need a lot of expensive new stuff: prosthetic knees and hips, cardio stents and defibrillators, cancer treatments, diabetes relief, soft forms of fibrous nutrition, comfy recreational vehicles, fat farms and surgeries, golf courses, motorized wheelchairs, broadband networks, guards with guns at the gate.

Under Obama, what they will get is value-subtracted services such as unionized educational and security bureaucrats who obstruct learning and safety, labyrinthine health-care money shuffles and legal hustles that drive doctors out of hospitals and into mental institutions, new layers of regulators to harass anyone retaining some investable savings, and "green jobs" in the CO_2-suppression business that yield no benefits at all to anyone but the carbonated hustlers who supply the "green" paint and agitprop.

The goal of real support for old people imposes an affirmative discipline on the entire economy: To sustain the coming masses of retirees, the economy must increase its productivity and the flow of innovative services dramatically over time. By contrast, maintaining high-and-rising tax rates today means a smaller economy tomorrow, with lower values for equities and assets—meaning less ability to sustain debt or to support retirees, or anyone else, with innovative goods and services.

Central to the problem is the payroll tax. Employees now pay 6.2 percent of wages, and employers match this, for a total of 12.4 percent of earnings up to $106,800. In addition, 1.45 percent of wages are withheld, and matched by the employer, for Medicare, with no earnings cap. If you opt out of this system and retreat to self-employment, you will have to pay 15.3 percent of your income into Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. Gilder is editor-in-chief of Gilder Technology Report *and co-founder of the Discovery Institute.*

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GREAT NEW SPEAKERS: LEWIS, PODHORETZ, DECTER SIGN UP!

Portugal & Spain Riverboat Cruise

Join Bernard Lewis, Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, Bing West, Michael Mukasey, Daniel Hannan, William McGurn, Kate O'Beirne, Kathryn Jean Lopez, and Kevin D. Williamson *on luxurious* MS Amadouro

for intimate sail on glorious Douro River, visiting Porto, Régua, Pinhão, Salamanca, Vega de Terron, and Lamego; sojourn starts with inclusive three-night / five-star stay in Lisbon

You just *can't* miss the ***National Review* 2010 Portugal and Spain Riverboat Cruise**—but you *will* if you don't act right away. We've chartered the intimate and luxurious MS *Amadouro* (with only 55 cabins available for our *NR*-only trip) to take our contingent of happy conservatives along the beautiful Douro River on a special seven-day, excursion-filled sail preceded by three glorious nights at Lisbon's five-star Tiara Park Atlantic Lisboa. Featuring a spectacular cast of conservative celebrities, the all-inclusive prices for this truly special voyage begin at only $4,399 a person. And only 25 cabins remain available!

Scheduled for May 12-22, *NR*'s riverboat sojourn will feature numerous seminar sessions—discussing current events and trends—with an impressive group of leading conservative writers, academics, and policy-makers. We are happy to announce three new speakers: **Bernard Lewis**, the West's premier scholar of Islam, former *Commentary* editor **Norman Podhoretz**, and **Midge Decter**, the esteemed author and social critic. They'll be joining former attorney general **Michael Mukasey**, international conservative star and European Parliament member **Daniel Hannan**, *Wall Street Journal* columnist and former chief White House speechwriter **William McGurn**, military expert and bestselling author **Bing West**, National Review Institute president **Kate O'Beirne**, *NRO* editor-at-large **Kathryn Jean Lopez**, and *NR* deputy managing editor **Kevin D. Williamson**.

This is a great opportunity to visit beautiful but less-traveled Iberian destinations. The *best* way to see and enjoy them (in comfort and style) is on the *Amadouro*, an elegant vessel that is a perfect match for the stunning Douro River, and for our program. The ***National Review* 2010 Portugal and Spain Riverboat Cruise** will let you enjoy exclusives such as a three-night stay in the five-star Tiara Park Atlantic Lisboa; a luxury seven-night cruise featuring top-quality excursions in each port; scintillating seminars with *NR* editors and guest speakers; revelrous cocktail receptions; late-night "smokers" featuring world-class H. Upmann cigars; and intimate dining with speakers and editors.

TEN WONDERFUL DAYS IN BEAUTIFUL PORTUGAL AND SPAIN

DAY/DATE	PORT	SPECIAL EVENT
May 12 (Wed)	Lisbon	Hotel check-in; day free
May 13 (Thu)	Lisbon	Tour of Old Town Lisbon and Jerónimos Monastery
May 14 (Fri)	Lisbon	Tour of Cascais & Sintra
May 15 (Sat)	Lisbon	Depart for Amadouro Coimbra City Tour (en route) Afternoon seminar, evening cocktail reception
May 16 (Sun)	Regua Pinhão	Morning seminar. Palacio de Mateus tour Gourmet dinner at Vintage House Hotel Late-night cigar smoker
May 17 (Mon)	Pinhão	Morning and afternoon seminars Afternoon Port wine lecture & tasting
May 18 (Tue)	Salamanca	City tour (all day) Late-night cigar smoker
May 19 (Wed)	Vega de Terron	Castelo Rodrigo tour. Afternoon seminar Evening cocktail reception Late-night Portuguese troupe performance
May 20 (Thu)	Lamego Bitetos	City tour. Afternoon seminar Dinner at Alpendurada Monastery Late-night smoker
May 21 (Fri)	Porto	Porto city tour Evening farewell cocktail reception
May 22 (Sat)	Porto	Debark

You've always wanted to come on an *NR* cruise: We've sailed 23 times since our premier 1994 sojourn (thousands have enjoyed them, and the "typical" *NR* cruiser has been on *five*!). And you've *always* wanted to visit Portugal. Our program of sharp and intelligent discussion of politics and policy, conservative revelry, and luxury cruising (and spectacular excursions to the most beautiful sites in Portugal and Spain) is certain to make this the trip of a lifetime.

Reserve one of the few cabins left on the intimate *Amadouro*: Call The Cruise Authority at 800-707-1634(M-to-F, 9-to-5Eastern) or visit **www.nrcruise.com** to sign up and join **Bernard Lewis, Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, Michael Mukasey, Daniel Hannan, Bing West, William McGurn, Kate O'Beirne, Kathryn Jean Lopez,** and **Kevin D. Williamson** May 12-22, 2010 on the ***National Review* 2010 Portugal and Spain Riverboat Cruise.**

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ACT NOW: JUST 25 CABINS LEFT ON THIS SPECTACULAR CHARTER TRIP!

Superior service, gourmet cuisine, elegant accommodations, and great tours await you on the beautiful *Amadouro*. This state-of-the-art river vessel features a sun deck with 360-degree view, restaurant with panoramic views, swimming pool and two Jacuzzis, observation lounge and bar with panoramic windows, elevator (reaches Lower, Main and Upper decks), English-speaking staff, and laundry service. Prices are per-person, based on double occupancy (there is a limit of two persons per stateroom), and include

- 3 nights at Tiara Park Atlantic Lisbon (includes breakfast)
- 7 nights aboard MS *Amadouro*
- Transfers: Airport-hotel, hotel-vessel, vessel-airport
- 2 Half-day tours in Lisbon, luncheon stop
- *NR*'s exclusive seminars, events, dinners, and receptions
- All shore excursions, gratuities, taxes, and port fees

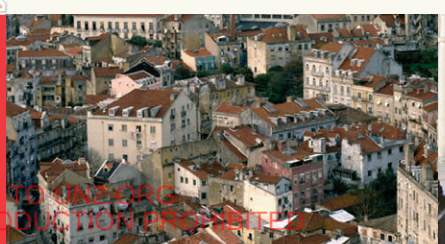
Category A ◆ Upper Deck $4,699pp (double occupancy). 135 square feet, including private verandah and seating, private bathroom & shower, TV, telephone, safe, hair dryer, individual climate control.

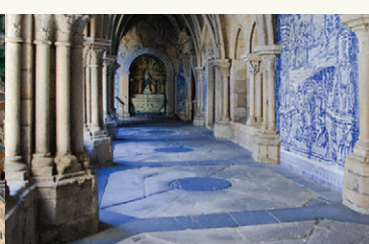
Category B ◆ Main Deck $4,399pp (double occupancy). 135 square feet, including large window, private bathroom & shower, TV, telephone, safe, hair dryer, individual climate control.

COME ENJOY TEN ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME DAYS

DAY 1: You arrive in beautiful **LISBON** and spend a relaxing day at the five-star Tiara Park Atlantic Lisboa. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 2:** With jet lag behind you, today you'll enjoy a morning tour of the Old Town and the spectacular 16th-century Jerónimos Monastery. The afternoon is time for you to explore one of Europe's historic capitals. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 3:** A great morning is followed by an afternoon excursion along the coast to **CASCAIS** (the Portuguese Royal Family's resort until the early 19th century) and **ESTORIL**. Then its on to the delightful mountain village of **SERRA DE SINTRA**, and the Castelo da Pena (a wonderful example of Portuguese Romantic Period architecture). ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 4:** After breakfast, we leave the Tiara Park for the *Amadouro* and our seven-night sail. Along the way we'll visit **COIMBRA**, a beautiful city, the former capital—birthplace to many Portuguese kings—and seat of one of Europe's oldest universities. The we arrive at **PORTO** The *Amadouro* departs from and returns to this renowned wine city. On board this afternoon, we will have our first scintillating seminar, followed by a revelrous cocktail reception and a gourmet meal. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 5:** The morning features our second seminar, and the we dock at **RÉGUA**, where our tour affords us a visit to the Palacio de Mateus, a beautiful *casa* with stunning gardens. We rejoin the *Amadouro* and head to **PINHÃO**, to dine in this quaint town at the riverside Vintage House Hotel. Aboard ship this evening, a fun-filled late-night smoker featuring complimentary cognac and world-class **H. Upmann** cigars. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 6:** A heady day with seminars in the morning and afternoon. Then we revisit **PINHÃO** for an afternoon Port wine lecture and tasting. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 7:** On to Spain and **SALAMANCA**. A UNESCO World Heritage Site located at the center of the "Castilla y León" region, we'll enjoy a full-day tour and visit the University, the 12th-century Romanesque church of San Martin, the House of Shells, and other famous local spots. Complementing the touring is a delicious, authentic Spanish lunch at a local restaurant. Tonight, back on the *Amadouro*, local entertainers will follow our gourment meal with a Flamenco show and a smoker with **H. Upmann** cigars. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 8:** Today we're back to Portugal and **VEGA DE TERRÓN** where we'll tour Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, a fortified village perched high on a hilltop, with 16th-century walls and narrow, steep medieval streets, famous for its Chafariz dos Pretos fountain. Back on the *Amadouro*, another seminar awaits, and before dinner, a delightful cocktail reception. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 9:** Charming **LAMEGO** is an ancient village of picturesque houses that is a revered stop for pilgrims visiting Nossa Senhora dos Remédios (Sanctuary of Our Lady of Remedies). During our tour, be sure to drop by a café to sample a "bola de Lamego" (bread filled with smoked ham) or a glass of Raposeira, the local sparkling wine. Tonight in **BITETOS** we'll savor a traditional "home cooked" meal at the 14th-century Alpendurada Monastery. In between is a seminar with our acclaimed guest speakers and editors, and the day ends with another late-night smoker sponsored by **H. Upmann** cigars. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 10:** We arrive back in **PORTO**, a sightseer's delight: Our tour here features 16th-century arcaded buildings, Baroque churches, and the magnificent iron bridge built by French engineer Gustave Eiffel. An afternoon seminar, a final cocktail reception, and a last delightful gourmet dinner will end the day. ↗ ↗ ↗ **DAY 11:** Yes, we said *10* days, but we won't officially count this melancholy one as you depart the *Amadouro* in the morning, heading for home, carrying happy memories of a wonderful trip and newfound friends!

SIGN UP NOW: VISIT WWW.NRCRUISE.COM OR CALL 800-707-1634





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These imposts come on top of income and corporate taxes that bring total levies on the output of productive employees to a marginal level near 50 percent, with the rates rising in 2011 at both the state and federal levels. At this point, an employer has more incentive to hide or shelter a dollar of existing income than to incur the stress of employing a worker to earn a dollar of new income. Meanwhile, by zeroing out the tax burden near the poverty line, the earned-income tax credit gives the system an oppressively "progressive" bias that discourages earning and aspiration.

This tax structure induces the retired to avoid new income, which is diminished nearly dollar-for-dollar by benefit reductions. Yet the best way to sustain the ever-increasing burden of health-care spending is by keeping skilled and experienced workers at work, where they add real value to the economy. Skilled workers create and maintain jobs for others and enhance the productivity of the entire work force. Today, such workers may find their skills more favorably employed on golf courses and beaches than in mentorships and consultancies.

Cutting the payroll tax is the best way to rectify an increasing bias in the economy in favor of retired old people and against the productive of all ages. The U.S. is mimicking Europe in transforming the young and ambitious into retirees or émigrés, with lost generations of youth and ever earlier retirements on the Riviera. But all the talk about how federal debt dooms our youth to a future worse than what our current boomers enjoy is true only to the extent we continue to saddle the young with counterproductive levies on their work as we drive healthy older workers into retirement.

The only way to make our current debt burdens manageable is to improve our economic environment and thus the value of the some $100 trillion in U.S. assets. Under Reagan, for example, an increase of $1.4 trillion in federal debt was dwarfed by a $17 trillion increase in the value of private assets. A particular source of increasing valuations could be the health-care industry—which will necessarily attract more funds as the population ages, and whose innovations will help extend productive careers by decades. From the completion of a worldwide fiber-optic broadband Internet to cornucopian energy advances, the global economy is engaged in a campaign of accelerating innovation that will unify it and enrich it as time passes. The U.S. can continue to prosper if we allow the billions of younger workers around the globe to use their increasing savings to buy the assets of American seniors as they grow older. This will offer liquidity to our retirees, sustain U.S. asset prices, and expand American opportunities.

The U.S. will also need to remain open to overseas innovations and policy improvements. Israel under the Netanyahu government is a creative extension of Silicon Valley that offers a haven for American enterprise and finance, which are increasingly stultified in California and New York. China is a bastion of strength for the dollar in the face of those who wish to weaken our currency to promote trade. Many countries offer valuable resistance to Obama's global-warming obsessions, which threaten to destroy America's energy prospects.

As a pay-as-you-go transfer scheme, Social Security is currently working fine. By ending the myth that somehow Social Security taxes are building up reserves for the future, we can reduce the payroll tax by at least a third. Then we should move toward a flat tax. Lower tax rates will mean more jobs and income for Americans of all ages, higher values for our equities and other assets, and the building up of real capabilities—as opposed to federal accounting balances. It's a policy that can win for Republicans and for America. **NR**

Cutting the payroll tax is the best way to rectify an increasing bias in the economy in favor of retired old people and against the productive of all ages.

Docs and Doctorates

Health care would be more accessible if you didn't need an M.D. to perform a colonoscopy

BY SHIRLEY SVORNY

A REPORT from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) lists 29 state studies that warn of looming physician shortages. Twenty-one specialty-specific studies and at least six national reports characterize the situation as critical.

The most recent comparable physician shortage occurred more than 40 years ago, when Medicare and Medicaid were introduced. At that time, the increased demand for physicians' services was met in part by changes in immigration law: In the 1970s, more than 40 percent of newly licensed physicians in the U.S. were trained overseas. At the same time, the output of domestic medical schools grew substantially, and together those changes helped alleviate the shortage. The concern now is that the large cohort of physicians who entered practice in the late 1960s and 1970s—one in three U.S. doctors is 55 or older—is nearing retirement.

The AAMC, which is involved in the accreditation of medical schools and other health-care education programs, has called for an increase in the number of medical-school graduates and corresponding increases in the number of residency positions. The enrollment increase is well under way. But even with new medical schools in several states and across-the-board increases in enrollment in existing schools, AAMC statistics suggest that a shortfall will be unavoidable as the population ages.

And we should be wary of the idea that training more doctors is a panacea for the supply shortage. Most physicians choose to settle in urban areas, and training additional physicians does not ensure that they will locate in underserved communities. In fact, it is mostly doctors' lack of interest in working in poor

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or remote communities that has prompted some states to overcome their opposition to the independent work of nurse practitioners.

The solution is rather to change the way medical care is provided in this country. Eliminating regulations and reforming reimbursement methods would free providers to innovate, reduce costs, and improve access to care. Directing public policy toward these ends is a tall order, but would certainly be no more disruptive of the status quo than the regulations proposed in the health-care bills before Congress. Deep, innovation-enabling reform would, however, lead to an outcome that the proposed health-care legislation wouldn't: more care at lower cost.

A 2008 report from the Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC), "Out of Order, Out of Time," blames the shortage of medical professionals on piecemeal regulation and market forces. As a solution, the authors advocate the establishment of a national planning authority to develop a "coherent, overarching health work force policy," as well as a "harmonization in public and private standards, requirements and prevailing practices across jurisdictions." This, however, would make the health-care system even more rigid. It would also subject regulators to intense pressure from various stakeholders, the most prominent being organized groups of medical professionals and hospital associations seeking to promote their own interests. For example, the AAHC's plan—which calls for guessing where shortages may occur and then subsidizing education in those areas—would increase federal funding for its members. And while both the American Medical Association and the American College of Physicians recognize the role advanced-practice nurses and other non-physician clinicians can play, they are fearful of the competition and demand that non-physicians be allowed to practice only with physician supervision. They persist in this demand even though there is no evidence that direct physician oversight of nurse practitioners is necessary.

The reality is that federal and state regulations play a far larger role than market forces in the shortage of doctors and other medical practitioners we face today. Federal Medicare and state Medicaid reimbursement rates are set below market prices, predictably causing shortages. States insist on regulating exactly what health professionals are allowed to do and require excessive levels of education and training that limit providers' entry into the marketplace, thereby restricting patients' access to care. Some states micromanage health care with laws that mandate nurse-to-patient ratios and restrict the independent activities of non-physician caregivers such as advanced-practice nurses and dental hygienists.

These regulations stifle innovation in the provision of health care. In other markets, consumer demand for efficiency and convenience has motivated changes in the way goods and services are provided. But except for the growing use of advanced-practice nurses and physicians' assistants, medical care remains much as it was 40 years ago: One doctor sees one patient, face to face, even as we rely increasingly on the telephone and e-mail for a broad range of other exchanges. The high cost of these static practices is thrown into relief by the rare innovations that do occur. In 2004, Kaiser Permanente Hawaii put in place a system that allows patients to contact physicians via e-mail. By 2007, in-person office visits had fallen more than 25 percent. Telemedicine also offers promise in meeting the health-care needs of underserved communities. It would benefit from the elimination of regulations that prohibit practicing across state lines.

Medical education in the United States is shaped by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, a joint project of the AAMC and the American Medical Association; its accreditation of medical schools forms the basis for professional licensing by the states. It currently requires adherence to inflexible rules and fixed teaching methods, making innovation difficult.

Robert H. Brook of the RAND Corporation suggests an innovation in medical education that would expand access to care without increasing the number of physicians. He argues that a fully trained gastroenterologist or surgeon is not needed to perform a colonoscopy (a common screening for cancer), nor a fully credentialed ophthalmologist to perform routine cataract surgery. Instead, he suggests, two years of focused education and training would yield professionals qualified to perform these procedures, vastly expanding patients' access to these services.

And given the concern over provider shortages, it is troubling that certifying organizations continue to raise the education requirements for non-physicians. Following a decision by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology to accredit only doctoral programs, 18 states now require a doctorate of audiologists. The new requirement adds two years to the time it takes to train an audiologist, significantly raising the cost of entry into the profession. Until the 1990s, physical therapists needed only a bachelor's degree. Then a master's degree was required. Now the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education has announced it will require doctorates by 2017. This adds three years of training beyond a bachelor's degree. Soon a doctorate will also be required for advanced-practice nurses and others. These decisions proceed from a self-interested desire to restrict the number of actors in the marketplace, and that is one reason no single organization should have the authority, under the law, to accredit medical schools or health-related educational programs.

State rules dictating how medical professionals must be trained and employed are ostensibly designed to protect consumers. It is, however, patently mistaken to defend these regulations on the basis that they offer protection beyond what private credentialing can provide. That is because the vetting process is already outsourced to private organizations, including specialty boards and malpractice-insurance underwriters. Taking into

Federal and state regulations play a far larger role than market forces in the shortage of doctors and other medical practitioners we face today.

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New 50 State $2 bill Program™ now underway

Restricted release gives just 1 out of every 1,291 households an opportunity to get the entire State $2 Bill Collection™

■ **HARD TO FIND:** This is the rarely seen U.S. Government issued $2 bill featuring the exclusively designed New York state overlaid printing. All 50 states are now available but may be hard to find because the World Reserve Monetary Exchange has restricted the issue and release of the exclusive 50 State $2 Bill Collection™, so getting one would be like hitting the lottery.

By Conrad Miller
Universal Media Syndicate

Most Americans have never even seen a government issued $2 bill, let alone the new rarely seen state overlaid $2 bills being issued and released exclusively by the World Reserve Monetary Exchange.

According to Thomas C. Harris, former Deputy Director of the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing and consultant for the privately held World Reserve, "Less than 1% of all notes currently produced are $2 bills."

And finding one of these exclusive $2 bills for each of the 50 states will be even more rare. That's because it has just been announced that the release of these new state $2 bills has been restricted. That means only 1 out of every 1,291 households will even have a chance to get them all.

With this new State $2 Bill Program™ now underway, collectors are expected to snatch up all they can making it even harder for the general public to get their hands on them. ■

Just 7 days left for U.S. residents to get the only existing state $2 bills

Private issue of hard to find state $2 bills being released for the next 7 days only in 4 packs of protective estate wallets each loaded with its own state $2 bill for just $12 per wallet

By R.K. Berry
Universal Media Syndicate

It's like a run on the banks. The phones just keep ringing off the hook.

That's because U.S. residents can only get the rarely seen state $2 bills for the next 7 days.

Residents are being urged to call 1-888-485-8214 or one of the five Overflow Hotlines to get their new state bills.

These special Toll Free Hotlines have been set up because you can't get these exclusive new bills at local banks, credit unions or even the Federal Reserve. They're being banded in packs of four and released directly to U.S. residents exclusively by the World Reserve.

These crisp U.S. Government issued $2 bills featuring the exclusively designed state overlaid printing are so precious you would never even dream of carrying them around in an ordinary leather wallet.

That's why they are being released in individually loaded rich protective estate wallets. They are so impressive, everyone will swear they must have been taken right from the President's desk.

"Our private vault reserves will soon be gone. So residents who want to get them had better hurry and call now," said Jefferson Marshall, Executive Director of the World Reserve Monetary Exchange.

Some collectors are trying to snatch up all the $2 bills they can get their hands on. They know that $2 bills are almost impossible to find in your pocket change these days.

Originally issued in 1928, the currently designed $2 bills have largely been locked away in the bowels of the U.S. Federal Reserve vaults, rarely distributed by banks and almost never seen in circulation.

"The $100, $50, $20, $10 and $5 dollar bills have all recently undergone major new design changes. And with a highly publicized Federal Court decision ordering the immediate redesign of all currency for the blind, it is now feared the historic design of these Two Dollar Bills will be discontinued and lost forever," he said.

"That's why we've authorized the release of a limited number of these uncirculated $2 bills overlaid with each state's restricted printing from our private vault reserve to all U.S. residents who beat the 7-day deadline. For now dealers can't get the vault packs of the state $2 bills to make sure residents can get what they need," Marshall said.

"These exclusive state $2 bills

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PUBLIC RELEASE BEGINS: At right is the rarely seen entire 50 State $2 Bill Collection™. These exclusive state $2 bills are not being released by banks and you can't get them from the Federal Reserve. So dealers and collectors who are lucky enough to find them are sure to be charging a hefty premium to let them go. But finding all 50 states will be hard and could take years, since the release of the new State $2 Bill Program™ is being restricted. That's why the World Reserve Monetary Exchange has agreed to release all 50 states together in one complete collection to residents who beat the deadline by calling 1-888-485-8214 in the next 7 days.

will be highly sought after and are extremely popular to hand out as gifts for friends and family. They are the perfect gift for any occasion," he said.

They are sure to impress because most people have never even seen one of these historically significant state $2 bills featuring their state's skyline, significant state symbol and President Thomas Jefferson on the front.

A dramatic engraving of the signing of the Declaration of Independence is featured on the back.

The $2 bills issued by the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing, makers of all of the nation's paper currency, make up less than 1% of the $670 billion in genuine U.S. currency that circulates worldwide, according to the U.S. Department of Treasury.

"Since these are the only existing state $2 bills, anyone who wants more than 10 sealed vault packs of 4 bills in protective estate wallets must submit requests in writing so there will be no hoarding by dealers," said Marshall.

"You better believe we will be strictly enforcing the limits so that we can guarantee there will be at least 10 vault packs for U.S. residents who call in the next 7 days," Marshall said.

GET THEM WHILE YOU CAN: This is the entire 50 State $2 Bill Collection™ that only 1 out of every 1,291 households will have an opportunity to get. Also shown are the new hard-to-find state $2 bills in the protective estate wallets, only released banded together in packs of 4, that everyone is trying to get for themselves and to give as gifts. They are so scarce that those lucky enough to get them will feel like they were handed a million dollars.

HOW U.S. RESIDENTS CAN GET THEIR STATE $2 BILLS

U.S. RESIDENTS ONLY

The special Toll Free Hotlines are open to U.S. residents only. Residents have just 7 days to get their states $2 bills beginning at 8:00am today. The World Reserve Monetary Exchange is only releasing the rarely seen state $2 bills banded together in packs of 4, each in its own protective estate wallet, for just $12 per wallet and shipping to U.S. residents who beat the 7-day deadline. There is a strict limit of 10 state $2 bill vault packs per household. To claim your $2 bills call the special Toll Free Hotline numbers below.

SPECIAL TOLL FREE HOTLINE:
1-888-485-8214
CODE: NL104

OVERFLOW HOTLINES

1-888-485-8215 1-888-485-8216 1-888-495-2292
1-888-495-2295 CODE: NL104 1-888-495-2297

WHAT TO DO IF ALL LINES ARE BUSY

If you are a U.S. resident trying to get the new state $2 bills within the 7-day deadline and have not been able to reach an operator by calling the special Toll Free Hotline or any of the five Overflow Hotline numbers, follow the steps below.

1) Immediately call the Toll Free Hotline number below.
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account its real costs—a false sense of security and the suppression of innovation—the existing regulatory structure cannot be justified. Economists agree that medical licensing is a constraint on the efficient use of resources and a drag on innovation.

Eliminating these burdensome rules would reduce supply constraints, but that alone will not be sufficient to generate more and better options for care. The prevalence of third-party reimbursement removes an incentive for consumers and medical professionals alike to use resources efficiently. For example, few consumers know what a physical exam actually costs or what it should include. Consequently, prices are rarely considered when patients and their physicians make decisions. The solution, as John C. Goodman of the National Center for Policy Analysis and others have pointed out, is to put health-care dollars directly into the hands of consumers. If health-savings accounts and similar measures were used to empower consumers while state regulations were simultaneously lifted, competition among suppliers would generate the type of innovation we enjoy in other service industries.

The elimination of regulatory constraints and third-party payment could also improve providers' earnings by expanding the scope of their practices and allowing market-rate fees, thereby drawing new practitioners into the marketplace. We won't really know how many physicians we need until we discover how the health-care industry can take advantage of technology and specialization. At that point, if we allow the markets to work, wages will adjust to reflect the real value of services instead of being arbitrarily set by a government agency.

Health-care providers would like us to believe that there is something unique about their business that requires heavy government regulation. They favor the low-competition status quo that has been secured through legislative and administrative mandates for education and practice, and their solution is more of the same. But it is government regulation that has brought us to this pass. Reducing regulation on the supply side while increasing consumers' power on the demand side is the combination most likely to produce better care at better prices. **NR**

'A Very Important Subject'

Internet freedom and a widespread restlessness

BY JAY NORDLINGER

THESE are heady days for Internet freedom. In "nonconsensual societies," as Robert Conquest calls them, people are pushing limits; and the governments are pushing back. Our secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, gave a speech on Internet freedom toward the end of January. She said, "This is an important speech on a very important subject." That's an unusual thing for a speaker to say, but she was absolutely right. And she proceeded to give a ringing defense of Internet freedom.

Technology has long been double-edged: an aid to the oppressed and an aid to their oppressors. Clinton took note of this in her speech. And she had a particularly stirring sentence: "On their own, new technologies do not take sides in the struggle for freedom and progress, but the United States does."

One government that reacted very badly to this speech was China's—lashing out at the U.S. for cyberhegemony, information imperialism, and related sins. The ruling Chinese Communists are trying to manage something difficult: They want to allow enough latitude and progress to let China grow and play a big role in the world; at the same time, they cannot, from their point of view, allow so much latitude and progress that people take them down.

In mid-January, Google posed to them a big challenge. The Internet giant had gone into China in 2005, agreeing to play by the Communists' rules: Google would censor its search engine, to block Chinese users from gaining information about Tibet, Falun Gong, and other "sensitive" subjects. But, this past December, Google became aware of an attack on its infrastructure from China. And the Google mailboxes of human-rights activists and their supporters were being invaded. Google said that this could not stand, and that it would no longer censor its search engine—even if it meant pulling out of China. The matter has not seen resolution as of yet.

Google's stance marks a serious change in the attitude of Internet companies. For years now, dictatorships have taken advantage of the "outsourcing of censorship," as the phrase goes: Companies such as Google, Yahoo!, and Microsoft have done their dirty work for them. Yahoo! even provided the Chinese authorities with information on dissidents that led to their imprisonment. The late congressman Tom Lantos, a Holocaust survivor, gave these companies a memorable dressing-down—more than one, actually. For example, in November 2007, he said, "While technologically and financially you are giants, morally you are pygmies."

In November 2009, a Chinese student had a question for a visiting Barack Obama: "Should we be able to use Twitter freely?" After some hemming and hawing, the president said yes. Twitter is partially blocked in China. And Facebook and YouTube are banned. The latter was banned in 2008 after videos of Chinese thuggery in Tibet were posted.

There is Internet restlessness in China, as there is restlessness in general. A mere three days after Google announced its new stance, a young Chinese computer whiz, Li Senhe, put up his own, quite unauthorized version of YouTube (a Google product, incidentally). It will likely not remain up for long. Li told the *Christian Science Monitor*, "I did this as a public service." But he is taking care to abide by Chinese censorship rules, lest he get more trouble than he really wants.

There is restlessness in the Middle East, too, of all kinds. Bloggers dot the Arab world. Sometimes they incur the wrath of authorities, and miserable things befall them. CyberDissidents.org has details (details that are not for the squeamish). In Egypt, hardly the most repressive country in the area, bloggers are being arrested in large numbers. Secretary Clinton took account of this in her speech. One of the arrested is a well-known blogger—more like an independent journalist—named Wael Abbas. He is insistent on human rights and democracy for his country. And the police have been harassing him and threatening him for years. They have accused him of being a Zionist agent, a Christian convert, a homosexual: These are very serious charges in Egypt.

Until now, he has been probably too big

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to arrest: too well-known and admired to throw in jail. But in the middle of January, he fell under the net.

In Iran, they are e-mailing, texting, Facebooking, tweeting: that is, the democratic protesters are doing so. It reached the point, last summer, where the mullahs' regime accused Western governments of using the new social media to execute a "soft coup." The mullahs are almost certainly right to be concerned.

Freedom House, the Washington, D.C.–based outfit, has a survey called "Freedom on the Net." It compares 15 countries: and finds Cuba the worst of them. Iran and China are better environments than the Castros' island. From the start—1959—the regime has taken care to keep tools out of the hands of democrats and other threatening people. Raúl Rivero, the poet and journalist, is now in exile in Spain. Back in Cuba, he would sometimes be visited by foreign journalists. They would ask him, "Anything I can do for you?" He would say, "Yes: Leave your pen."

Cellphones and laptops were illegal until 2008. And even now, very few have them, for the cost of those items is out of reach. An American tried to alleviate this situation. He is Alan P. Gross, and he is now in a Cuban prison. Gross works for a subcontractor of the U.S. Agency for International Development. He went to Cuba to distribute cellphones and laptops to civil-society groups. On December 4, he was at the airport, about to leave the country. And the regime arrested him as a spy.

Despite fearsome odds, there is blogging in Cuba, from Cuba: Daring writers get their work out to contacts abroad, who then post the writings. The best-known blogger is Yoani Sánchez, who last November 6 was beaten to a pulp by state security. About two weeks later, she circulated answers from President Obama—answers to questions she had posed to him. He congratulated Sánchez and her fellow bloggers on their "collective efforts to empower fellow Cubans to express themselves through the use of technology."

One who marvels at what protesters and dissidents are able to do, in many countries, is Ignat Solzhenitsyn, middle son of the late, heroic author. Would the Soviet Union have allowed any Internet access at all (if it could help it)? The Soviets banned even copying machines, to say nothing of fax machines later on. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's books got around because they were typed, one copy at a time. The writer's allies would do this, painstakingly. Imagine how difficult or tedious it is to type even a few pages of a book, says Ignat. Now imagine typing the whole book—and doing it in secrecy, at risk of capture, imprisonment, and death. He says that the Soviet Union would have collapsed much faster with technology such as today's.

Last summer, observing the Iranian protests, defense secretary Robert Gates had a comment or two. He said that the new media represented "a huge win for freedom around the world," because a "monopoly of information is no longer in the hands of the government." A dictatorship, he said, "just can't draw the net tight enough to stop everything. If you can't text, then you Twitter." Maybe. But tyrannical governments have proven ingenious at thwarting and stifling their citizens.

Possibly, the nerve Google recently found will embolden other tech companies. At the Davos conference in late January, Twitter's CEO, Evan Williams, said that his people were working on ways to stop governments from blocking Twitter technology. About such blocking, he said, "The most productive way to fight that is not by trying to engage China and other governments whose very being is against what we are about"; it is to find "technological ways" around them.

After Google's mid-January announcement, a touching thing happened. Day after day, ordinary Chinese came to Google's Beijing offices to leave flowers and notes: in appreciation for the company's pro-freedom stand. One of the notes, attached to a bouquet, said, "Google: Pure Man." That there is hunger for freedom, Internet and otherwise, have no doubt. **NR**

Day after day, ordinary Chinese came to Google's Beijing offices to leave flowers and notes . . .

Professor of Contempt

The legacy of Howard Zinn

BY ROGER KIMBALL

With Howard Zinn, contemporary American academia found its court historian. Zinn, who died January 27 at 87, was like a gigantic echo chamber, accurately reproducing—and actively reinforcing—every left-wing cliché with which the academy has abetted its sense of election these past several decades. "You see how smart he is," saith the tribe, "he thinks exactly as we do." Zinn's biography tells us that he was the author of "more than 20 books." But only one matters: *A People's History of the United States*. Published in 1980 with appropriately modest expectations—it had, I read somewhere, an initial print run of only 5,000 copies—the book went on to sell some 2 million and is still going strong. Its Amazon sales rank as of February 1, 2010, was 7. Seven. That's a number most authors would climb over broken bottles to achieve 30 days after their books were published. Here it is 30 years on.

How to explain such phenomenal success? The publisher had doubtless assayed the book's intellectual merits and proceeded accordingly. Left out of account was the presumption of its political message. The extremity and consistency of that message—that America is and always has been an evil, exploitative country—guaranteed its success among the tenured radicals to whom we have entrusted the education of our children. More to the point, this history "from the perspective of the slaughtered and mutilated" nudged out all other contenders for the prize of becoming the preferred catechism in American—that is to say, anti-American—history. *A People's History* is *the* textbook of choice in high schools and colleges across the country. No other account of our past comes even close in influence or ubiquity. No other, more responsible, telling of the American story had a chance. How could it? Given a

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choice between a book that portrayed America honestly—as an extraordinary success story—and a book that portrayed the history of America as a litany of depredations and failures, which do you suppose your average graduate of a teachers college, your average member of the National Education Association, would choose? To ask the question is to answer it. What this means is that most American students are battened on a story of their country in which Blame America First is a cardinal principle. No element of our heritage, from the derring-do of Christopher Columbus to the valor of the U.S. military in World War II, escapes the perverting alchemy of Howard Zinn's exercise in deflationary revision.

To his credit—well, it's not really to his credit, since he offers the admission only to disarm criticism, but Zinn is entirely candid about the ideological nature of his opus. All history, he says, involves a choice of perspectives. Maybe so. Are we therefore to assume all perspectives are equally valuable? Zinn employs this relativist's sleight of hand in order to promulgate his preferred species of intolerance, which appeals to latitudinarian sensitivities only because it is an intolerance fabricated in opposition to the established order. If "all history is ideological" (it isn't really), then why not make your choice based on what appeals to your political sympathies, truth be damned? That's the takeaway of Zinn's admission, and it's all he offers to explain his decision, which he details at the beginning of his book, to tell the story of

> the discovery of America from the viewpoint of the Arawaks, of the Constitution from the standpoint of the slaves, of Andrew Jackson as seen by the Cherokees, of the Civil War as seen by the New York Irish, of the Mexican war as seen by the deserting soldiers of Scott's army, of the rise of industrialism as seen by the young women in the Lowell textile mills, of the Spanish–American war as seen by the Cubans, the conquest of the Philippines as seen by the black soldiers on Luzon, the Gilded Age as seen by southern farmers, the First World War as seen by socialists, the Second World War as seen by pacifists, the New Deal as seen by blacks in Harlem, the postwar American empire as seen by peons in Latin America.

In other words, what Zinn offers us is not a corrective, but a distortion. It is as if someone said to you, "Would you like to see Versailles?" and then took you on a tour of a broken shed on the outskirts of the palace grounds. "You see, pretty shabby, isn't it?"

The one indisputably valuable thing about *A People's History of the United States* is the way it illustrates a melancholy fact about the place of reasoned argument in human affairs. In brief, it occupies a lamentably attenuated place. Placed in opposition to a wish driven by the Zeitgeist (that's German for "what the *New York Times* preaches"), reasoned argument doesn't stand a chance. Item: Soon after *A People's History of the United States* was published, the historian Oscar Handlin wrote a devastating review of the book for *The American Scholar* (which was still a respectable magazine).

"It simply is not true," Mr. Handlin noted,

> that "what Columbus did to the Arawaks of the Bahamas, Cortez did to the Aztecs of Mexico, Pizarro to the Incas of Peru, and the English settlers of Virginia and Massachusetts to the Powhatans and the Pequots." It simply is not true that the farmers of the Chesapeake colonies in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries avidly desired the importation of black slaves, or that the gap between rich and poor widened in the eighteenth-century colonies. Zinn gulps down as literally true the proven hoax of Polly Baker and the improbable Plough Jogger, and he repeats uncritically the old charge that President Lincoln altered his views to suit his audience. The Geneva assembly of 1954 did not agree on elections in a unified Vietnam; that was simply the hope expressed by the British chairman when the parties concerned could not agree. The United States did not back Batista in 1959; it had ended aid to Cuba and washed its hands of him well before then. "Tet" was not evidence of the unpopularity of the Saigon government, but a resounding rejection of the northern invaders.

And on and on. In any normal world, Zinn would have stolen away in the middle of the night, fled to a mountain fastness in Peru, and taken up llama ranching. In this world, however, he went on to fame and fortune.

Oscar Handlin left Zinn's "deranged . . . fairy tale" in tatters. But the eye of love continued to regard it as an unspoilt beauty. Hence the 2 million copies, the Amazon ranking, the exuberant grief that taxed the powers of hyperbole commanded by obituarists across the republic as they competed with one another to freight the word "progressive" with ever more awesome pulpit tones.

The obituaries of Howard Zinn make for interesting, if not exactly edifying, reading. Zinn himself, of course, is the hero of the moment, the model "progressive" warrior who spoke truth to power, struggled against the demons of American imperialism, and condoled the weak, the oppressed, the inarticulate. The villain of the story was John Silber, former president of Boston University and for the 24 years Howard Zinn taught there the bane of his existence. In the obituaries, Silber is invariably described as "conservative" or "right-wing." In fact, he is a liberal in the antique, i.e., the classical mode. While a dean at the University of Texas, Silber labored to abolish segregation. He was an energetic supporter of Head Start, was instrumental in Boston University's involvement in improving an inner-city school, and has battled tirelessly to further the vocation of the liberal arts and the life of the university as a primary institutional home for that vocation. During his disreputable tenure as a professor at Boston University, Howard Zinn did everything in his power to subvert the university, partly by subordinating its intellectual mandate to trendy political causes, partly by short-circuiting with malicious levity the high seriousness of a liberal-arts education. He would, for example, pass around his classes a bag containing bits of paper imprinted with the letters "A" or "B." Whichever token a student picked denominated his grade, no matter what work he did or didn't do.

The point? It wasn't merely grade inflation. More insidiously, it was an expression of contempt for the entire enterprise of which he was a privileged beneficiary. Contempt, in fact, was Howard Zinn's leading characteristic. Its primary focus was America, because that was the biggest game in town. But he had plenty left over for the rest of the world. As Oscar Handlin observed in his review, "It would be a mistake . . . to regard Zinn as merely anti-American. Brendan Behan once observed that whoever hated America hated mankind, and hatred of humanity is the dominant tone of Zinn's book. No other modern country receives a favorable mention. He speaks well of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, but not of the states they created. He lavishes indiscriminate condemnation upon all the works of man—that is, upon civilization, a word he usually encloses in quotation marks." Howard Zinn has left us. But his repellent ideas—and even more, the contemptuous nihilism that stands behind and fires those ideas—live on. **NR**

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Myths About Israel and the Middle East (2)

Should we re-examine endlessly repeated clichés?

In a previous installment in this series of clarifying messages about Israel and the Middle East, we examined certain myths which, by dint of constant repetition, had acquired currency and acceptance. We looked at the myth of "Palestinian nationhood," the myth of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") being "occupied territory," the myth that Jewish settlements in these territories are "the greatest obstacle to peace," and the myth that Israel is unwilling to "yield land for peace." And we cleared up the greatest myth of all, namely that Israel's administration of the territories, and not the unrelenting hatred of the Arabs against the Jews, is the root cause of the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. But those are not all the myths; there are more.

What are more of these myths?

■ **Myth:** The Arabs of Israel are a persecuted minority.

Reality: The over one million non-Jews (mostly Arabs) who are citizens of Israel have the same civil rights that Jews have. They vote, are members of the Knesset (parliament), and are part of Israel's civil and diplomatic service, just as their Jewish fellow citizens. Arabs have complete religious freedom and full access to the Israeli legal, health and educational systems – including Arabic and Muslim universities. The only difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews is that Jewish young men must serve three years in the military and at least one month a year until age 50. Young Jewish women serve for two years. The Arabs have no such civic obligation. For them, military service is voluntary. Not too surprisingly, except for the Druze, very few avail themselves of the privilege.

> "It is in our national interest that reality, not myths, govern our policy."

■ **Myth:** Having (ill-advisedly) already given up control of the Gaza Strip, Israel should also give up the administration of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") because strategic depth is meaningless in this age of missiles.

Reality: Israel is a mini-state – about half the size of San Bernardino county in California. If another, even smaller mini-state were carved out of it, Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of 100 retired U.S. generals and admirals. If the Arabs were to occupy whatever little strategic depth Israel has between the Jordan River and its populated coast, they would not need any missiles. Artillery and mortars would suffice, since Israel would be only nine miles wide at its waist. Those who urge such a course either do not understand the situation or have a death wish for Israel.

■ **Myth:** If Israel would allow a Palestinian state to arise in Judea and Samaria it would be a democratic state and would be totally demilitarized.

Reality: There is no prospect at all that anything resembling a democratic state could be created in the territories. There is not a single democratic Arab state – all of them are tyrannies of varying degrees. Even today, under partial Israeli administration, Hamas and other factions fight for supremacy and ruthlessly murder each other. Another Lebanon, with its incessant civil wars, is much more likely. The lawlessness and chaos that prevail in Gaza since Israel's withdrawal is a good prospect of what would happen if Israel – foolishly and under the pressure of "world opinion" – were to abandon this territory. As for demilitarization, that is totally unlikely. Because – with Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, most of which are in a declared state of war with Israel, at its borders – an irresistible power vacuum would be created. Despite pious promises, the arms merchants of the world would find a great new market and the neighboring hostile Arab countries would be happy to supply anything else that might be needed.

■ **Myth:** Israel should make "confidence-building gestures" for the sake of peace.

Reality: What really is it that the world expects Israel to do for the sake of peace? Most of the 22 Arab countries consider themselves in a state of war with Israel and don't even recognize its "existence." That has been going on for over sixty years. Isn't it about time that the Arabs made some kind of a "gesture?" Could they not for instance terminate the constant state of war? Could they not stop launching rockets into Israel from areas that Israel has abandoned for the sake of peace? Could they not stop the suicide bombings, which have killed hundreds of Israelis and which have made extreme security measures – such as the defensive fence and convoluted bypass roads – necessary? Any of these would create a climate of peace and would indeed be the "confidence-building gestures" that the world hopes for.

Countless "peace conferences" to settle this festering conflict have taken place. All have ended in failure because of the intransigence of the Arabs. President Clinton, toward the end of his presidency, convened a conference with the late unlamented Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak, the prime minister of Israel at that time. Mr. Barak offered virtually everything that Arafat had requested, except the partition of Jerusalem and the acceptance of the so-called refugees, their descendants having swollen from the 650,000 who fled the nascent state of Israel during the War of Liberation, to an incredible 5 million. Arafat left in a huff and started his infamous intifada instead, a bloody war that has cost thousands of Palestinian and Israeli lives. Israel is America's staunchest ally and certainly its only true friend in that area of the world. It is in our national interest that reality, not myths, govern our policy.

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Senator Tea Party

In Jim DeMint of South Carolina, the conservative resurgence finds an ally

BY JOHN J. MILLER

Jim DeMint wasn't looking forward to his conversation with Arlen Specter last spring, but he didn't want to avoid his Senate colleague, either. The Republican from South Carolina had decided to endorse Pat Toomey, who had launched a GOP primary bid against Specter in Pennsylvania. "I wanted to tell Arlen face to face, before it became public," says DeMint.

On April 23, in a room just off the floor of the Senate, DeMint approached Specter and let him know. "I was going to explain my reasoning," says DeMint, but Specter cut him off. "I've heard enough," he muttered, and walked away. Five days later, Specter abandoned the GOP itself. He became a Democrat.

"I'm not going to take credit or blame for that," says DeMint today. "I think he had already made up his mind to switch." Even so, plenty of Republicans seemed eager to denounce behavior such as DeMint's for shrinking the party. "Some conservatives would rather lose than be seen as compromising on what they regard as inviolable principles," grumbled Texas senator John Cornyn, who heads the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC). Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine contributed an op-ed to the *New York Times*. GOP moderates, she warned, "often get the distinct feeling that [they're] no longer welcome in the tribe." Even DeMint's fellow travelers at the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* piled on: "Republicans shouldn't follow South Carolina Senator Jim DeMint and welcome Mr. Specter's defection as an ideological cleansing."

If DeMint once looked like a crotchety conservative who was satisfied to serve in a dwindling and disgruntled minority, he now appears more like the prophet of a coming resurgence. Until recently, many Republicans would have been content to pick up a mere handful of Senate seats in the midterm elections this year. With Scott Brown's startling special-election victory in Massachusetts, however, there's talk of sweeping gains not just for the GOP in general, but specifically for the conservatives within it.

ROMAN GENN

Even if Republicans don't take control of the chamber—a hard task, even in a favorable political environment—they could give Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and other Democrats a genuine scare. DeMint's particular gamble in Pennsylvania may pay off handsomely: In January, a Rasmussen poll of likely voters showed that Toomey has surged from underdog to favorite. He leads Specter by nine points and Specter's Democratic primary opponent, Rep. Joe Sestak, by eight points.

"This is part of an American awakening," says DeMint. "If people want to take back their government, they can do it. No state is out of play." DeMint is now positioning himself as the Great Awakener—a national leader of a highly decentralized tea-party movement whose activist energy may hold the key to turning 2010 into another 1994 for the GOP.

The 58-year-old DeMint grew up in Greenville, S.C., with a single mother who operated the DeMint Academy of Dance and Decorum in their house. When one of her students lacked a partner, his mother would ring a bell. This was to summon DeMint, who would have to fill in, even if it meant dancing with a man. "Scarred me for life," he jokes. Later, DeMint became the drummer for a rock-and-roll cover band called Salt & Pepper, so named because half of its members were white and half were black—a bit of integration in a South Carolina that was still escaping the legacy of Jim Crow. "I could have been a rock star, except I had no voice or talent," says DeMint. He did, however, have a first-rate cackle: When his band performed the beach-rock classic "Wipe Out," originally recorded by the Surfaris, DeMint provided the wild laugh that kicks off the song.

DeMint earned degrees at the University of Tennessee and Clemson, joined an advertising company, and eventually founded his own marketing firm. He says he was too busy to think about politics—it rarely entered his mind. "I had kids and a business," he says. "I didn't even know who my congressman was." Then, toward the end of the 1980s, he ran a focus group that asked the residents of a public-

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housing development to describe the challenges they faced. "One woman told us, 'Stop paying our babies to have babies,'" he recalls. It dawned on him that many social ills were the unintended consequences of government policies.

A few years later, in 1992, Bob Inglis walked into his office. They didn't know each other, but Inglis was thinking about running for Congress, and he sought DeMint's advice. They struck up a friendship, and DeMint became an adviser. Inglis won and served three terms. When he stepped down in 1998, DeMint decided to pursue the vacant House seat. "I was 47 years old and I had never run for anything," he says. (The memoir-like first chapter of his recently published book, *Saving Freedom*, is called "From Normal to Politician.") During the GOP primary, he campaigned for abolishing the tax code, privatizing Social Security, and passing a right-to-life amendment. He finished second—and did well enough to force a runoff, which he won against a candidate who was seen as a favorite of religious conservatives.

In the House, DeMint earned a reputation as a free trader, even though he hailed from a state whose representatives traditionally had pushed for textile protectionism. He says that his trade votes—for presidential trade-promotion authority and closer ties with China—were some of the most difficult he has cast. "Voters had a very negative perception of trade," he says. "I took a lot of heat." This regional apostasy earned him a primary challenger in 2002. DeMint survived that threat and made good on a promise to serve no more than three terms.

In 2004, he ran for the Senate. Once again, he finished second in the GOP primary, behind former governor David Beasley, and went on to win a runoff. Then he captured the seat that retiring Democrat Ernest Hollings had occupied for nearly four decades. This year, DeMint is running for re-election and does not appear to face serious opposition.

As a senator, DeMint has compiled one of the most conservative voting records in Washington. The American Conservative Union gives him a lifetime rating of 98.4 percent. No other senator has a higher mark. In August, a reporter for the *New York Times* sneered at him as "a back-bencher with little influence in Washington's corridors of power"—a sure sign that his influence was in fact growing. The criticism came in the wake of a minicontroversy in which DeMint demonstrated a knack for getting under the skin of Democrats, including President Obama.

Last summer, on a conference call with conservative activists, DeMint discussed ways to block the nationalization of health care. "If we're able to stop Obama on this, it will be his Waterloo, it will break him," he said. An audio clip of the comment became a sensation on left-wing blogs. The White House had a fit—or at least thought it had found a useful villain. Obama quoted the line in a speech and condemned it as an example of irresponsible Republican obstructionism. A few of DeMint's colleagues suggested that he stick to a script that called for criticisms of congressional leaders such as Reid and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, but not Obama, who at the time was seen as bulletproof. DeMint ignored their advice. "My point was that we could break his momentum, his rampaging agenda toward overspending and debt," he says. "I wanted to stop the president so that he would work with us rather than steamroll us."

The skirmish over this metaphor seems only to have energized the South Carolinian. On September 12, when a swarm of tea-party activists descended on Washington, DeMint was the only senator to address them. "Welcome to Waterloo!" he said to a cheering crowd. "We must stop this government takeover of health care."

DeMint has opened other fronts in his fight against the Obama administration. One is in Honduras, where a constitutional crisis led the military to depose the president last summer. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called it a "coup." DeMint, who serves on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wasn't so sure. But he didn't have any special expertise in Honduras or its laws. A member of his staff suggested that he contact a Honduran-American whom many conservatives in Washington already knew, at least by reputation: Miguel Estrada. President Bush had selected him for the federal bench in 2001, but Democrats filibustered his nomination. Estrada, a U.S. citizen, lived in Honduras until he was 17. Now a lawyer in private practice, he was following events in his native land closely.

DeMint and Estrada had not met previously, but soon Estrada found himself in the senator's office. They pored over Honduran legal documents, which Estrada had located on government websites and translated. Estrada persuaded the senator that the Hondurans had ousted their president legally, in order to prevent a despotic power grab. "We did our homework," says DeMint. Yet the Obama administration continued to criticize what had taken place. DeMint responded by blocking confirmation votes on a pair of nominees: Arturo Valenzuela for assistant secretary of state for Western-hemisphere relations and Thomas A. Shannon for ambassador to Brazil.

Then, in September, DeMint planned his own fact-finding mission to Honduras—only to find himself thwarted by Sen. John Kerry, the Massachusetts Democrat who heads the Foreign Relations Committee. Even though the committee's Democrats had spent record amounts on their own international travel (according to a *Boston Globe* analysis), Kerry refused to release funds for DeMint's trip. DeMint went anyway, under the auspices of Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican. "When we got down there, it was obvious that this was no military coup," says DeMint. "We didn't see soldiers patrolling the presidential palace." The spat with Kerry generated additional publicity for DeMint and his views on what was happening in Honduras.

The story has a happy ending. Hillary Clinton and the State Department eventually came around, however grudgingly. DeMint let the votes on Valenzuela and Shannon go forward. Honduras held new elections in November and inaugurated a new president in January, with the approval of the U.S. government. "The senator kept the administration honest," says Estrada. "He was invaluable."

DeMint's next dustup with the White House came in the aftermath of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's failed attempt to blow up a Detroit-bound jetliner on Christmas. DeMint had prevented a vote on Erroll Southers, Obama's nominee to head the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), on the grounds that Southers had refused to answer questions about plans to unionize airport screeners. After the bomb plot, liberals hoped DeMint would cave in to a public that demanded the swift confirmation of a TSA chief. DeMint went through another round

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of criticism from all of the usual sources—a *New York Times* editorial called his position "wrongheaded" and "destructive"—but he held firm. On January 20, Southers pulled his name from consideration.

This was the day after Brown's victory in Massachusetts. If the timing wasn't a sheer coincidence, it was an early indication of how much Washington's political dynamics changed when the GOP cracked the Democrats' 60-vote supermajority in the Senate. In the months ahead, DeMint probably will pick new battles with the Obama administration—but his greatest influence may come in shaping the course of the 2010 Senate elections. His objective is not merely to defeat Democrats, but to elect conservatives.

He'll do it through the Senate Conservatives Fund (SCF), the political-action committee he founded in response to recent GOP failures. "I was one of the top fundraisers for the NRSC," says DeMint. "But when I'd make phone calls, people kept telling me that they weren't going to give another dime until Republicans started acting like Republicans." DeMint figured they would give to conservatives, however, and he was right: In 2009, the SCF raised more than $1.3 million, which it is now directing toward conservatives within the Republican party, often to the consternation of the GOP's Washington establishment.

The first sign of DeMint's willingness to buck his more cautious colleagues came when he decided to support Toomey over Specter. A few weeks later, on the day the NRSC formally endorsed Florida governor Charlie Crist for his state's Republican Senate nomination, DeMint met with Marco Rubio, who had already announced his candidacy. "When I heard Marco talk about his principles, it was clear to me that this was someone we would want here in the Senate," says DeMint. Crist, by contrast, had warmly endorsed Obama's stimulus spending and even hugged the president at a political rally. Rubio was little known, even though he had served as speaker of the house in Florida's legislature. One survey showed him trailing Crist by 35 points. DeMint endorsed him anyway. "A lot of people thought I was crazy, but I may have caused others to give Marco a look," he says. That's exactly what happened. Rubio grabbed the spotlight in a primary contest that Crist thought he had locked up. Polls now show Rubio and his rival running neck and neck.

DeMint has ruffled feathers in two other campaigns. In California, he backs Chuck DeVore, a GOP state assemblyman, even though many Republicans have gotten behind former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina. (Former congressman Tom Campbell is also in the race.) In Texas, DeMint has called for the election of Michael Williams in the event that Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, currently a candidate for governor, makes good on a promise to resign from her office. He's searching for other opportunities as well. It's possible to imagine the SCF backing insurgent Republicans in Colorado, Delaware, Kentucky, New Hampshire, and possibly elsewhere. "In November, the country will move back toward conservative principles," says DeMint. "We don't have to settle for milquetoast Republicans who don't care about anything but getting elected—and we'll be kicking ourselves if there are states in which we don't run real conservatives."

A year ago, Republicans were despondent about their electoral prospects. Last summer and fall, they turned hopeful. Now they're bullish. If 2010 turns out to be the kind of year they currently anticipate, Jim DeMint and his conservative allies may enjoy the last laugh. Don't be surprised if it sounds like the manic start to that song he used to play years ago—"Wipe Out." **NR**

The Coming Tea-Party Election

For the GOP, it's an opportunity, not a threat

BY RAMESH PONNURU & KATE O'BEIRNE

REPUBLICAN congressmen don't know what to make of them. Journalists are alarmed. Paul Krugman says the tea partiers are driven by "cultural and racial anxiety" about President Obama. David Brooks says they are "against the concentrated power of the educated class." And Rep. Maxine Waters (D., Calif.) wants to expose them. Deeply suspicious of demonstrators' references to "Obamacare" on the Mall last fall, she stated, "I want those people talked to; I want them interviewed."

The National Review Institute has obliged Representative Waters, commissioning McLaughlin & Associates to take a detailed look at tea partiers: both the 6 percent of the 1,000 likely voters polled in mid-January who told McLaughlin that they had participated in tea-party rallies and the additional 47 percent who said they "have not participated in a tea party protest but . . . generally agree with the reasons for those protests." The results dispel a number of myths.

The first is that the tea partiers are driven by racial animus against the president. Actually, a third of the people who participated in tea-party rallies say that they approve of Obama's performance in office and a fifth say that they voted for him in 2008. Five percent of them are black, 11 percent Hispanic. Of those who agree with the protests, 29 percent approve of Obama's performance. Waters and Krugman can rest easy.

The second myth is that the tea partiers are unpopular. Krugman wrote last April that the tea parties "have been the subject of considerable mockery, and rightly so," and Brooks speculated that "the tea-party tendency" might "be the ruin of the Republican party, pulling it in an angry direction that suburban voters will not tolerate." Some Republican officials worry that media criticism and Democrats' attacks on the activists have made it politically risky to associate themselves with the tea-party movement.

The polls do not bear out this fear. Most voters don't consider themselves well-informed about the tea parties, but have a favorable view. As noted already, 53 percent of the electorate look sympathetically on the tea parties. McLaughlin also asked likely voters which characterization of the tea parties they leaned toward: an "anti-government, fringe organization that is driven by anger" or a group of "citizens concerned about the country's economic future." A majority of 57 percent chose the benign characterization while only 19 percent disagreed. Even a plurality of self-identified liberals went with "concern" rather than "anger."

Republican strategists think of the tea partiers as this era's analogue of Ross Perot's followers in the early 1990s. But the Perot voters were secular, socially liberal, and concerned above all with

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the single issue of the deficit. It was largely in order to court them that Republicans kept social issues out of the Contract with America.

Most tea-party sympathizers, on the other hand, are pro-life. They are more pro-life than the electorate as a whole, although less so than Republicans. Their religious practices are roughly in line with those of the electorate. Tea-party participants, meanwhile, are both more pro-life and more frequent churchgoers than the electorate. Social issues may not be what binds the tea partiers together or what matters most to them, but social issues are not going to drive a wedge between them and Republicans.

Tea-party supporters are concerned about the deficit, but not to the exclusion of other issues. They don't want to cut the defense budget. A small, 52 percent majority of them believes we "should cut taxes to stimulate growth" while only 37 percent say that the deficit makes tax cuts unaffordable (and a tiny 7 percent want tax increases to reduce the deficit).

The tea partiers are often said to be populists hostile to Wall Street and big business. But while they clearly oppose bailouts of financial firms, their antipathy may not go much farther than that. McLaughlin asked likely voters whether they think that "we should impose a new tax on banks because they have benefited so much from bailouts and need to be reined in," or that "bank customers would end up paying the tax and the economy would suffer." The anti-taxers were a majority in the poll (52-38 percent), and both tea-party participants and tea-party sympathizers were even more strongly on the anti-tax side. In McLaughlin's poll, a majority of likely voters want to cut taxes on corporations. Tea partiers were especially likely to agree.

In some polls, the tea-party movement has been more popular than either the Republican or Democratic parties. Some Republicans have worried that the tea partiers could contest elections as a third party. McLaughlin's results suggest that only a minority of tea-party participants and sympathizers would vote for a tea-party candidate if given the option, while a plurality would back the Republicans. But Republicans would suffer enough losses that the Democrats would win. Republicans lead Democrats by 5 percentage points on the question of which party voters favor in House elections. Add a tea-party candidate to the choices, though, and the Democrats win by 5 (the Tea party takes 8).

So if tea-party activists put up their own candidates, the effect is likely to be to divide their supporters and elect the politicians they like least. Republicans have to hope that the activists want to avoid this outcome.

But Republicans can do more than hope. They can appeal to the tea partiers and ally with them. While the tea partiers often express disgust with the Republican record on spending and bailouts, their views on most issues are within the mainstream of the Republican party. As we have seen, they are concerned about deficits but enthusiastic about tax cuts; they are pro-life; they are pro-defense. McLaughlin also finds that they favor increased reliance on nuclear power. They listen to the same talk-radio shows that conservative Republicans do. Their demographic profile looks very similar to that of Republicans.

Which is not surprising, since they're generally the same people. The tea partiers are, for the most part, Republicans. Specifically, they are a highly engaged, but not highly partisan, segment of the party. A majority self-identify as Republicans and as conservatives. A full 68 percent of tea-party sympathizers voted for John McCain in 2008—which was, it need hardly be noted, low tide for the GOP. Some of the tea-party activists take pride in their movement's independence from the Republican party, and Republicans reaching out to them need to be mindful of that fact. But it's also true that they're not going to have to reach very far.

The tea partiers seem unlikely to pull the party too far to the right. Participants in the tea parties are out of step with the public on some issues—they favor cutting Medicare and Social Security, for example, and eliminating the withholding of federal taxes from paychecks, steps that most voters are (sadly) unwilling to take. But the broader tea-party movement does not share these views.

The challenge for Republicans who want to work with the tea partiers can usefully be compared to the challenge presented to an earlier generation of Republicans by the rise of religious conservatism. Many Republicans worried about religious conservatives in the late 1970s and early 1980s: Who were these people? Were they extremists who would hijack the party and make it unelectable?

But that challenge was harder. A lot of the religious conservatives were former Democrats who disagreed with Republicans about the New Deal. They wanted the party to address a range of issues that had not been part of the party's mission previously, and on which many Republicans had taken contrary views. (The Republican party was the historical home of Planned Parenthood.)

The tea partiers are already part of the Republican party, and all they want is its recommitment to its own cause of reducing the size and scope of the federal government. They are not unpopular and their views are not extreme.

THE bad news for Republicans is that appealing to the tea partiers and reuniting the party's traditional supporters is not enough in the long run. If tea-party sympathizers end up forming a majority of the electorate this year, it will only be because of reduced enthusiasm in the Democrats' base. Here, too, the parallel to the Republicans' response to the rise of religious conservatives is instructive. The party did not adopt their issues to the exclusion of all others. Republicans agreed with them on school prayer and abortion. But they also took positions on crime, national security, and taxes that had appeal to other groups (in addition to having appeal to most religious conservatives).

The National Review Institute poll suggests that Republicans have the potential to stitch a majority coalition together today. Tea-party sympathizers strongly favor an alternative to Obamacare that allows interstate purchases of insurance, curbs malpractice suits, and creates risk pools to help people with preexisting conditions. But so do half of the people who said they disagree with the tea parties. Most tea partiers favor expanding the tax credit for children. But an even larger proportion of people who disagree with the tea parties favor it.

A few Republicans have reacted to the rise of the tea parties with worry. But it is generally good news for a party when a group of people who share its views become active in politics. Some tea-party activists may be rough around the edges, as some religious conservatives were. Some will drop out of politics after their first electoral wins do not translate into an immediate turnaround in government, as some religious conservatives did. But others will get experience in forming majority coalitions and become valuable parts of the party infrastructure—if Republicans form a productive partnership with them. If Republicans can't do that, they deserve to go out of business. **NR**

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THE WAY Of the Whigs?

Lincoln's first political party dissolved, and so could today's Republicans

BY HENRY OLSEN

Scott Brown's improbable win in the Massachusetts Senate election is the latest and most dramatic evidence of the Republicans' greatly improved electoral outlook. As polls have shown dissatisfaction with President Obama rising and Democratic leads in congressional generic-ballot polls shrinking or gone, GOP operatives have started 2010 with visions of 1994 dancing in their heads.

But a closer look at the data rings alarm bells. Recent polls also show that voters' ratings of the Republican party and Republican members of Congress have barely budged and remain sharply negative: Greater support for GOP candidates has not meant greater support for the GOP in general. Independents consistently outnumber both Democrats and Republicans, and GOP party identification remains at or close to 70-year lows, with some polls showing less than a quarter of Americans saying they are Republicans.

It's tempting to dismiss these negative signs. Conservatives are fond of citing polls that show self-described conservatives outnumbering self-described liberals by nearly two to one, a figure that has remained roughly stable since the mid-1970s. "America is a center-right nation," elephantine apologists say, and since the GOP is a center-right party, the political implications are supposedly clear. They argue that the GOP's poor standing doesn't matter in a two-party system; anger at Democrats inevitably leads to GOP votes. Once Republicans are back in power, they can reestablish the center-right majority and return to dominance.

I'm not so sure. I see the current state of affairs as an intensification, perhaps even a culmination, of four interrelated 25-year political trends: a growing distrust of conservative and liberal ideologies, a growing movement away from the two parties and toward political independence, increases in the racial-minority (which usually means Democratic-voting) share of the population, and a growing inability of the Republican party to bridge the gap between its populist and elite wings.

Together, these trends raise the specter of a serious independent, populist presidential candidacy for the first time in a century. And if the GOP doesn't adapt to the shifting political terrain, there is even a remote possibility that the identity of America's two dominant parties will change for the first time since the 1850s, which saw the death of the Whigs and birth of the Republicans.

Mr. Olsen is a vice president of the American Enterprise Institute and director of its National Research Initiative.

Consider the first trend, a retreat from ideology. Despite the party polarization in Congress, it's clear from polls and election results that the public has been seeking a middle ground for quite some time. On fiscal issues, polls show a desire for less government and lower taxes in the abstract, but support for most specific (and expensive) government programs. On cultural issues, polls show that people want abortion with serious restrictions, and gay rights without gay marriage. Even conservatives' much-touted voter-identification advantage can be exaggerated. While self-described conservatives do significantly outnumber self-described liberals, the largest group during the modern political era has always been self-described moderates.

Further, election results since 1980 suggest unwillingness to accept rule by either party's base. Left-leaning Democrats like Michael Dukakis and John Kerry were rejected even when facing Republican nominees with strong disapproval ratings. Successful candidates of either party relied on overtly centrist appeals. Both Bushes made clear breaks with the GOP's base, Bush 41 by invoking a "kinder and gentler nation" (which infuriated Nancy Reagan: "Kinder and gentler than who?" she famously quipped) and Bush 43 by embracing a "compassionate conservatism" that envisioned a strong role for government. Clinton spoke of "ending welfare as we know it" and infuriated the Left by signing a welfare-reform bill. And Obama rocketed to public acclaim with his 2004 Democratic-convention address, in which he spoke of one America, neither red nor blue.

This trend toward pragmatic centrism can perhaps be most clearly seen in the rise of something that is now almost commonplace, the independent campaign for governor or president. Between 1928 and 1968, third-party presidential candidates represented ideological splinters from either the left (Henry Wallace in 1948, Socialist Norman Thomas in 1928 and 1932) or the Jim Crow South (Strom Thurmond in 1948, George Wallace in 1968). Third-party candidates at the state level were rare and, when victorious, represented a wing of a fractured party, like James Buckley, who was elected senator from New York on the Conservative-party ticket in 1970. Truly independent candidates, people who ran without the backing of any established party, were virtually nonexistent.

Since 1988, however, this has changed, with third-party candidates running against rigid ideology instead of espousing it. Independent centrists have won governorships in Connecticut, Maine, and Minnesota; others have run strong but losing races. Ross Perot did well for a third-party candidate when he ran for president in 1992 and 1996, and speculation about independent candidates such as Colin Powell and Michael Bloomberg is now a staple of the presidential season. Candidates of this type have different personalities and biographies but are cut from the same political cloth: They invariably run against special interests and for the people, as fiscal but not social conservatives, and promise the sort of pragmatic problem-solving of which party-backed candidates are said to be incapable.

One might be tempted to dismiss these trends as products of the candidates' particular strengths rather than expressions of mistrust of ideology, but our second trend—growing voter self-identification as political independents—provides evidence against that interpretation. In 1964, according to Gallup polls, 51 percent of Americans identified themselves as Democrats, 25 percent as Republicans, and 23 percent as independents. But as Democrats showed themselves unable to solve the nation's

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problems, and with Republicans mired in seemingly permanent minority status, both parties dropped in public esteem. In 1980 the breakdown of voters' political affiliations was 45 percent Democrat, 23 percent Republican, and 29 percent independent, and despite Republican electoral successes over the next three decades, the proportion of Americans who say they are independent has continued to rise. In every year since George H. W. Bush's defeat in 1992, the number of Americans identifying themselves as independents has equaled or exceeded the number identifying themselves as Republicans, according to annual polls by the Pew Research Center.

The political stasis that characterized the 1992–2008 period, an era that Michael Barone famously called "50-50 nation," was in fact not 50-50 but a roughly equal three-way split between a liberal Democratic base, a conservative Republican base, and an independent third group that switched or divided its allegiance depending on which party seemed responsive to its concerns.

REPUBLICANS who see the party's underlying weakness and want to address it, however, must also address our last two trends, both of which are harmful to the GOP. The first is America's changing demography. Since 1980, immigration and larger black turnout have created an electorate that is increasingly non-white, which means increasingly Democratic. In 1980, 88 percent of the voters were white; in 1988, 85 percent were. By 2008, the number had dropped to 74 percent, and McCain lost non-white voters 81-18. Meanwhile, whites are becoming wealthier and more educated. Such voters, who increasingly vote Democratic, tend to be concentrated in non-southern suburbs. Reagan and Bush 41 were able to win majorities of them, but in 2008 Obama carried non-southern whites earning over $80,000 a year.

These shifts have changed the electoral landscape. Political journalist Ron Brownstein has calculated that if six demographic groups (blacks, Hispanics, Asians, other minorities, college-educated whites, and all other whites) had voted in 2008 as they actually did but had composed the shares of the electorate that they did in 1992, McCain would have beaten Obama by 2.3 percent.

Demographics are projected to get even worse for the GOP in coming years. Census estimates show that 34 percent of the American population is non-white, with the number rising to 44 percent among children. Even if immigration is halted, an unlikely event, the non-white share of the electorate will grow. Under those circumstances, a Republican who does not raise his or her share of the non-white vote well above the record highs recorded by George W. Bush in 2004 will by 2016 need to carry 60 percent or more of the white vote to get a majority.

And that will not be possible if Republicans do not heal their divisions. That brings us to our fourth trend: the growing rift between the two major wings of the party, the populists and the elite.

Modern conservatism started as a revolt against the eastern, liberal, urban wing of the Republican party. Goldwaterites made common cause with the easterners' old adversaries, Republicans from the party's midwestern wing, which was pro-business and suspicious of government intervention both at home and abroad.

But by the early 1970s, the conservative movement had grown beyond its old base to incorporate many former Democrats. They were economically conservative, although often not as conservative as the Goldwaterites; they were internationally interventionist; and they added a cultural-conservative component to GOP campaigns. They were disproportionately from areas where the GOP had not done well in generations: the South and the ethnic Catholic wards of big and medium-sized cities.

Ronald Reagan united all wings of the movement on the basis of populist style as much as ideology. From his casual brown suits to his folksy demeanor, Reagan sought to portray himself as a humble representative of what he called in a prescient 1964 NATIONAL REVIEW article "the forgotten American—that simple soul who goes to work, bucks for a raise, takes out insurance, pays for his kids' schooling, contributes to his church and charity and knows there just '*ain't no such thing as a free lunch*.'" The character of his following was obvious. The journalist Theodore H. White remarked to Reagan aide Lyn Nofziger that Reagan's 1980 victory party was "the frowsiest crowd of frumps" he had ever seen. Nofziger replied, "Yup, that's us. We're the middle class."

Since 1980, intra-GOP fights have increasingly been waged between candidates who are comfortable with this new movement and those who are not. Reagan's nearly successful 1976 challenge to incumbent president Gerald Ford united what remained of the old eastern and midwestern wings in opposition to it. And Reagan's presidency shifted the ground so much that by 1988, Bob Dole—who twelve years earlier, as Ford's running mate, had been seen as an arch-conservative—was viewed by many conservatives as a moderate because of his willingness to raise taxes. With liberal Republicans leaving the party in droves, and with conservative former Democrats joining by the day, Dole was easy pickings for George H. W. Bush, who ran as a populist conservative and clinched his nomination with a win in a state previously unimportant to GOP hopefuls, South Carolina.

Once in office, however, Bush governed in a manner reminiscent of the country-club Republicans. On issue after issue, he sided with the old elites over the new majority, and the 1992 elections are best seen as two consecutive populist revolts against him. First Pat Buchanan challenged Bush in the primaries on an anti-tax theme, doing quite well in initial heats. Then Ross Perot launched a populist campaign that split the Reagan-Bush coalition, leading to the election of Bill Clinton even though Clinton received a smaller share of the vote than Michael Dukakis had four years earlier.

The GOP's electoral fortunes since have depended in large part on the ability of its leaders to unite populists and elites behind a shared goal. President Clinton's missteps would have made 1994 a good year for Republicans in any event, but Newt Gingrich's uniting of populist fervor (term limits, an end to congressional corruption) and elite concerns (balanced-budget amendment, fiscal probity) through the Contract with America turned a good year into a historic one. Similarly, the domestic and international stresses of the past few years would have hurt Republicans in the 2006 and 2008 elections regardless. But the GOP's congressional leadership exacerbated these problems through its failure to offer a comprehensive governing agenda. This led to wild gyrations in emphasis to satisfy populist and elite demands, an inconsistency that ultimately hurt the Republican image among both groups.

More recent elections have shown the importance to the GOP of getting this balance right. Doug Hoffman in New York's 23rd

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Bob McDonnell and Scott Brown—the measured, reasonable approach

congressional district had many flaws, such as his lack of familiarity with local issues and his non-residence in the district. But surely his campaign style, a brand of fiery populism that excited grass-roots conservatives, contributed to his final defeat. Many moderate Republicans who were backing the establishment GOP candidate, Dede Scozzafava, ended up voting for the Democrat, Bill Owens, whose campaign was languishing below 40 percent in the polls before she dropped out and endorsed him. On the other hand, candidates like Scott Brown have shown it is possible simultaneously to satisfy the populist desire for an ordinary person who opposes Obama's agenda and the elite desire for someone thoughtful and willing to work with reasonable people from all parties.

Seen against this backdrop, the continuing debate over the proper role of tea-party conservatives in the 2010 elections is merely the latest flashpoint in a multi-decade war. Each side in this war should recognize that it needs the other to win, as a recent Rasmussen poll demonstrates. This poll showed that the Republicans led the Democrats by seven points in a generic congressional ballot, but that if a third "Tea party" was added, the Democrats won handily, pulling 36 percent versus the hypothetical party's 23 percent and the GOP's 18 percent.

WHERE does this leave us? Republicans should first remember that politics is like tennis, and the Democrats are serving. It's very hard to break service against a competent player, and there is still time for Obama and his party to regain their game. Obama's slide in the polls has been steep, but his year-end standing was eerily similar to Ronald Reagan's in December 1981. Back then, Reagan had 49 percent approval; Obama had 50 percent in the late-December 2009 polling average on RealClearPolitics. Reagan's numbers slid throughout 1982 as the economy worsened, reaching their nadir at 35 percent in January 1983.

But Reagan recovered nicely, relying on issues that unified his coalition, like hard-line positions against the Soviets. The fast-recovering economy also helped, and as his numbers recovered—and with Democrats unable to overcome their own intra-party divisions during their presidential primaries—Reagan swept to an epic reelection win that placed the GOP on the path toward the continued power it would wield for another 20 years.

If both of today's parties continue their missteps, however, it is not at all inconceivable that a serious third-party presidential candidate could arise. In this scenario, by early 2012 independents would make up a record-high 40 percent or more of the electorate. President Obama would be discredited, blamed for governing from the left and failing to improve the economy while saddling our nation with previously incomprehensible deficits. The GOP would be viewed as the party of incompetence and narrow-mindedness, simultaneously alienating elites and populists. It's easy to envision the rallying cry for this candidate: "Republicans are for the rich, Democrats are for the government, I'm for you."

One should not overestimate the odds of such a candidate's success. Independent campaigns must spend many months and millions of dollars simply qualifying for the ballot in 50 states. They lack the fundraising and volunteer infrastructures that a major party can provide, and without a primary campaign or any presence in the White House or Congress, they must fight extremely hard to receive the free media coverage that major-party campaigns command. But in a scenario where both major parties are discredited and the electorate is looking for a third way, one would be foolish to dismiss the possibility of an independent win.

Such a victory would be historic enough, but it need not end there. Current trends, if left unchecked, will produce a political situation quite similar to that of the early 1850s, which led to the demise of the Whig party. The Whigs collapsed under the pressures of immigration and issue-driven populism. Largely Anglophile, they could not make common cause with the Irish and German immigrants who streamed into the country starting in 1848, and their affluent southern wing could not make common cause with the burgeoning anti-slavery movement, which launched three successive third-party campaigns between 1844 and 1852. Yet the Democrats could not reconcile their southern, slaveholding base with these constituencies either, and this created fertile ground for a new party—the Republicans—to grow in.

A more recent example of a major party's destroying itself by immobility and inaction took place in Canada. The Progressive Conservative party, one of the two founding parties of modern Canada, imploded because of its inability to appeal to Canada's Asian immigrants or unite its western, populist wing and its eastern, elite wing. In the 1993 election, the PCP went from 150-odd seats in Parliament to two, and after a decade of confusion, a

McDONNELL: LUIS M. ALVAREZ/AP BROWN: MICHAEL DWYER/AP

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new party, the current Conservatives, arose to reunite the Right under the leadership of an immigrant-friendly westerner, Stephen Harper.

The path the original Republican party took can be followed by its modern descendant. The Republican party of Lincoln (a former Whig) was diverse and contained many groups seemingly opposed to the others. German immigrants broke bread with anti-immigration Know-Nothings; abolitionists shared space with anti-abolition unionists; pro-slavery, anti-tariff former Democrats partnered with pro-tariff former Whigs. They were unified by a common cause—opposition to the extension of slavery into new territories, including the vast swath that had been won in the Mexican War—and a spirit of cooperation led them to compromise on their differences in pursuit of that goal.

The monstrous deficits being created today could play the same role for the modern GOP (or its replacement) that slavery extension played for its founders. Independents and moderate Democrats are increasingly frightened by the deficits but oppose large tax increases on the middle class. Like antebellum southern intransigents, however, the modern progressive Democratic base seems unwilling to accommodate these concerns in its rush to expand the government, a rush that ultimately can be financed only by high taxes on the middle and upper-middle classes like those seen in Canada and Western Europe. In the 1850s the Democratic party drove away many of its northern members who had reluctantly tolerated slavery, because the party's raucous southern base rejected any compromise. Today, the raucous progressive blogosphere is already trumpeting the song of no compromise, sending shivers down the spines of moderate and elite Democrats.

While we should not overemphasize the parallel between Lincoln's times and ours, the political analogy is on point. Any issue or concern that is widely believed to be of crucial importance by large majorities of swing and base voters can be used to create new and lasting political coalitions. It is not inconceivable that a new party arising to combat Obama's deficits could be as diverse as the original Republicans, including immigrants and anti-illegal-immigration activists, social conservatives and agnostic professionals, populist Blue Dogs and traditional Republicans. Whether this coalition would be gathered under a new party founded by an independent president seeking a congressional base, or would be merely a reborn Republican party, is one of the political questions that would face GOP leaders.

Certainly the recent victories of Brown, Bob McDonnell, and Chris Christie demonstrate a possible way forward, but it is much easier to campaign than it is to govern, as Obama is now learning to his dismay. An opposition party can hold together and rally the public against an unpopular opponent, but once it takes power, internal fissures grow more prominent and a skeptical public becomes much less indulgent. The ongoing trends mentioned above will make the task of governing even tougher for the Republicans, should they regain power, than it now is for the Democrats.

This long-term lesson must not be lost on the GOP. Relying on Obama and the Democrats to double-fault may win one election, but is unlikely to produce a lasting majority. If the Republicans do not resolve their internal tensions and adjust to demographic shifts and changing public attitudes, they could easily resume their decline and perhaps even go the way of the Whigs. **NR**

FATTED Leviathan

The time bomb of runaway benefits for government employees

BY KENT OSBAND

THE collapse of the housing market has been an object lesson for America. Households and banks borrowed too much on expectations of continuing appreciation in real-estate prices. This extra borrowing inflated a bubble until it burst. By discounting the future too optimistically, we let the good times roll away.

The collapse of Chrysler and GM has been another object lesson. Management and unions pledged too many worker and retiree benefits on expectations of continuing demand for their gas-guzzlers. By discounting the future too optimistically, they let the good times roll away.

The private sector is now rethinking its unrealistic optimism. It has to, since its asset valuations have tumbled. Payrolls are shrinking. Benefits are being cut back. Both management and workers are accepting that they have to work harder for less. Government is upping the pressure by hiking taxes, requiring banks to raise more capital, and demanding more-objective risk reporting.

But the government is not applying these lessons to itself. On the contrary, the public sector's tendency to discount the future too optimistically is growing. It is pledging ever more payoffs to its employees and wards and concealing more than ever their true costs, even as private-sector incomes fall.

The public sector employs about one-sixth of the U.S. work force. Apart from the expansions and contractions of the military, that share hasn't changed much since World War II. About one in five public-sector jobs is federal, with civilian government and the military each employing roughly 2 million. Nearly another million work in federally owned enterprises, most of them in the Postal Service.

Average federal pay is distinctly higher than private-sector pay. After adjusting for part-time work and the cash value of payment in kind, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reports a wage and salary premium in 2008 of 33 percent for the military and 58 percent for civilian government. It wasn't always that way. All of the military premium and nearly half the civilian premium were created between 2000 and 2005.

These premiums were needed to improve recruitment and retention. In 1997, the Congressional Budget Office concluded that the government paid 22 percent less than the private sector for similar jobs. Bolstering the military after 9/11 was also a priority.

Mr. Osband, an investment professional, is the author of Iceberg Risk.

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For reasons of efficiency and fairness, the extra pay might have been coupled with reducing the job security and trimming the benefits that federal employees traditionally enjoy. It was not. On the contrary, the federal benefit edge has widened. It is not easy to measure how much, for the government refuses to publish direct comparisons. However, a few months ago, Chris Edwards of the Cato Institute deduced from BEA statistics that from 2000 to 2008, benefits grew a whopping $16,000 per full-time federal civilian employee, versus $3,000 per private employee. Federal benefits are now more than four times private benefits.

What was intended as catch-up, then, is now in overdrive. In 2008, federal employees were relatively well insulated from the financial crisis. Their benefits were guaranteed, they bore little risk of layoff, and the thriving business of government buoyed housing valuations for D.C.-area residents. A sense of shared national burden would have called for public-sector restraint in 2009. Instead, as millions of private workers lost their jobs and real incomes declined, civilian federal salaries were boosted 3.9 percent. Not surprisingly, resignation rates for federal employees have sunk to less than a third of private-sector averages.

FORTUNATELY for taxpayers, about 80 percent of public-sector employees work for state and local governments. The great majority of them are employed in education or public safety. These are middle-tier occupations for the most part. By BEA's accounting, state- and local-employee salaries track private-sector salaries fairly well.

But the data the BEA uses can be crude. The Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides far more detailed breakdowns, except for federal employees, about whom it has been ordered to keep quiet. In particular, the BLS monitors employer costs per labor hour. From fiscal and productivity standpoints, this measure is far more important than take-home pay.

According to the BLS, state and local governments in September 2009 paid $39.83 in salary and benefits per hour worked. That is 45 percent higher than what private employers paid. The salary component was one-third higher. The benefit component was two-thirds higher.

While state and local employees' salary advantage has been stable for at least a decade, their benefit advantage has widened considerably. In inflation-adjusted terms, private benefits per working hour have risen by nearly a dollar since 2000. The corresponding state- and local-employee benefits have risen by nearly three dollars.

Compounding the disparity, public-sector employees typically receive benefits that are far more secure than those that private-sector employees receive. According to a recent study from the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, almost 80 percent of state and local workers age 25–64 have pensions from their employers, and 80 percent of these pensions provide strictly defined benefits (i.e., they impose no risk from shortfalls in investment proceeds). In contrast, only 45 percent of private employees of the same age have pensions from their employers, and only 40 percent of these pensions provide strictly defined benefits.

Moreover, public-sector benefits tend to kick in at lower ages, with better cost-of-living adjustments and fewer deductibles for health care than private-sector benefits. Only older, heavily unionized private firms offer comparable perks, to their regret. They have been sinking for years under the load and need another $150 billion–plus from the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to meet their commitments. They have become international symbols of how not to regain an edge. Yet our civil service is emulating them.

In the pecking order of socioeconomic sins, overpaying public-sector employees is hardly the worst. Better to overpay, for example, than to grossly underpay, which encourages both bad work and corruption. Paying people well to work well can be win-win.

But these perks aren't. To begin with, they pay for comparatively little work. Full-time federal employees with three years of service or more can take off 43 weekdays a year with full pay: 10 holidays, 20 days vacation, and 13 sick days. Employees with 15 years of service get an additional six days of vacation a year. A program called "time off as an incentive" grants extra paid leave "to recognize excellent employee performance." And those with two to three decades of service qualify for retirement at ages 50 to 60 with full or nearly full benefits.

Some state and local programs reward not working even more. Since 1999, California has allowed state employees to retire at age 50 with as little as five years of service. Each year, pensioners receive a certain percentage of their final salaries for each year they worked. Most employees hired in their twenties can retire by age 55 or earlier with 50 percent or more of their highest salary locked in for life, with full inflation adjustment. The state also pays 100 percent of health-care costs for retirees with at least 20 years of service.

Such pledges are anachronistic. They date from an era in which 25 years of hard manual labor broke workers' health, medical technology was limited, benefits were low, average lifespans were under 65, and the worker-to-retiree ratio was extremely high. They are totally unsuited to the 21st century, in which people can work productively for 40 years or more, expensive medical technology is beating back infirmity, benefits are extensive, and the worker-to-retiree ratio is dropping below two to one.

These programs will have to adjust, be it through the market incentives that the Left abhors or the health-care rationing that the Right abhors. But it is difficult to roll back previously granted benefits, no matter how foolish or exorbitant. Experts at the Center for Retirement Research explain that "many state courts have ruled that the public employer is prohibited from modifying the plan" once an employee has started work. Increased employee contributions can come only from new hires.

While wrapped as public-spiritedness, such benefits are actually assaults on future generations. When education bills get padded with extra retirement benefits for teachers, they guarantee that a larger share of future education budgets will be siphoned off to people who no longer teach. That can't possibly help the next generation to learn. Nor can it help the next generation of teachers, who will have to settle for lower pay and worse benefits to keep their states afloat.

State and local fiscal crises will force these issues to the fore. Wages and benefits account for about half of state- and local-government spending. Medicaid, a benefit awarded without any requirement to work, absorbs much of the rest. Over time, wage

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and benefit expansion has strained the government's capacity to service debt, even under higher tax rates.

The Great Recession is now pushing some over the brink. State and local operating budgets, which exclude capital expenditures, have traditionally run small surpluses, reflecting legal requirements to stay in the black. Back in 2007, even before the crisis hit in full force, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) warned of breakdown, with deficits increasing from now until doomsday. In January 2009, the GAO was even gloomier, adding about 0.5 percent of GDP a year to projected shortfalls.

If they stay on their current track, state and local governments will within a few decades accumulate higher average debt-to-GDP ratios than the federal government has now. Yet they command far fewer resources with which to repay their debts. They cannot print money, and their residents are free to relocate if they raise taxes too much. The short word for where this leads is "insolvency."

Some of our biggest states and localities are already insolvent. California is so far under water that serious budget-balancing has given way to creative gimmicks for borrowing against the future. New York is racing to beat it to the bottom.

The problem is less the nominal deficit than the gaping holes off the balance sheet. If state pension funds were held to traditional accounting standards for banks, never mind the tighter new standards, most of them would have negative capital. They owe clearly defined benefits, with no right to scale them back, yet don't hold nearly enough assets to guarantee debt servicing out of ordinary dividends. So they invest heavily in risky equities, hope for high returns, and get hammered in downturns.

It's a bit like buying a home beyond one's means and counting on appreciation to service the mortgage. Lenders are rightly castigated for having exacerbated this practice through low standards and deceptive packaging, the so-called liar loans. But liar loans still abound in the public sector, under the guise of "Pension Obligation Bonds." Strapped governments borrow at U.S. Treasury rates plus a premium, pledge to make even more by reinvesting in equities, and treat the wished-for profits as hard assets on their balance sheets. Presto, the budget looks balanced again. And if the equities get nailed, well, distract the public with a new accounting trick.

The Center for Retirement Research estimated in November 2008 that equities held in defined-benefit state and local retirement plans lost $1 trillion from their peak in October 2007. Even at the peak, these plans were only 87 percent funded; a year later, the funding coverage had declined to 65 percent. Due to the growing gap between liabilities and contributions, the Center's most optimistic scenario projected a rebound to only 75 percent funding by 2013.

Recently, the GAO estimated that unfunded retirement benefits for state and local employees exceed $530 billion. Top dishonors go to New York State, whose government, largest city, and largest counties underfund pensions by at least $119 billion. Authorities in California underfund by at least $91 billion. New Jersey underfunds by at least $51 billion. Together these three account for nearly half of all underfunding. Illinois is almost surely fourth, but Cook County refused to report its liabilities. Special mentions go to Detroit and Boston, which despite their moderate size have racked up unfunded liabilities of roughly $6 billion apiece.

Hardly any of the most insolvent state and local authorities can haul themselves back to solvency on their own. Few are even trying. They are simply rolling over their debt as long as they can, and counting on the federal government to bail them out when they can't.

Last year's stimulus staved off a reckoning, but that won't last. Lucy Dadayan and Donald J. Boyd of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government report that state tax receipts, adjusted for inflation, have declined an average 12.5 percent over the past four quarters. This is the worst decline on record.

Hopefully, the federal government will not reward irresponsible state and local authorities with bailouts this time around. But if for political reasons it must, there are various ways it can do so. The most transparent is for the federal government to assume their debts. This is also the most embarrassing. It openly taxes residents of other states for debts they did not assume and government services they did not receive. It openly rewards the spendthrift over the frugal. It openly belittles the Obama administration's pledge of enhanced fiscal discipline going forward.

The most efficient and fairest bailout would be a partial one. The Obama administration would disclaim responsibility for state debts, in line with the Constitution and historical precedent. But in recognition of the severe recession, and of the burden previously imposed through unfunded mandates, the federal government would provide bailout funds to the states in proportion to their population. The problem here is political. It would surely offend core Democratic constituencies.

The most politically appealing bailout would come through a health-care bill. Most of the shortfall lies either in future health-care costs for state and local employees or in the current costs of Medicaid. Any transfer of responsibility to the federal government in this area therefore disproportionately helps New York, California, New Jersey, and Illinois. And it will help them even more in legislation that drops the proposed tax on the "Cadillac" health-care plans their employees hold.

If deftly executed, such a policy's economic impact wouldn't differ much from that of an open bailout. But its packaging as aid to all state and local governments would conceal the massive transfers from frugal to spendthrift. That is why a modest carve-out from Medicaid financing persuaded Nebraska senator Ben Nelson that his state would come out on top, even though Nebraska reports no underfunded retirement claims at all.

And routing bailout funds through health-care legislation is risky. As Donald Boyd has noted, many people currently eligible for Medicaid don't enroll. If reform makes the option more familiar and mainstream, costs could spiral out of control. States that trim back care in response will face opposition from advocacy groups, Congress, and courts.

That leads back to the path of least resistance. Promise savings that don't materialize. Roll over debt that can't be serviced. Preach responsibility while deferring it. Wait for panic to force your hand.

The generations that will pay the highest price aren't of voting age yet, and some haven't been born. Eventually they will rebel against their burdens. When they do, it will make the current tea-party movement look like, well, a tea party. **NR**

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The Long View

BY ROB LONG

From the Pelosi inbox . . .

TO: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
FROM: NP@speakersoffice.gov
RE: I'm hungry

Hey Dianne . . .

Hate to bother you, but I'm sitting here in my office and suddenly craving something sweet. Can you handle this? Thnx . . . NP

TO: OfficeofNavalCatering@usnavy.gov
FROM: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
RE: Official diplomatic gift

Hey Barbara:

The Speaker has asked me about the viability of having a military jet deliver a dish of ice cream from her favorite spot in San Francisco as a diplomatic gift in her official capacity as Speaker of the House. What's the soonest a jet could leave SFO and arrive in D.C. with a dish of Cookies 'n' Cream and Heath Bar ice cream? As I said, it's an official request for official business, so the faster the better.

Dianne

TO: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
FROM: NP@speakersoffice.gov
RE: soap on plane is too drying

Dianne:

The soap on the military plane we've been using is WAY too drying for me. I have requested a gel-type soap but have so far been rebuffed. Please take care of this ASAP, as we're all traveling next weekend and I don't like to be all itchy. NP

P.S.: Found the chardonnay on the last trip home a bit oaky. Can we replace??

TO: CODELtraveloffice@airforce.gov
FROM: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
RE: Arrangements for this weekend, etc.

Hey Mike . . .

The speaker has asked me to interface with your office in a couple of matters regarding Congressional Delegation travel. For future CODEL flights—especially the ones between Washington, D.C., and San Francisco—is there any way to replace the existing military-issue soap in the aircraft restrooms with a more moisturizing brand? Dry skin is a problem for the Speaker, and I know that when she's traveling on official business, she likes to keep moist and supple.

Also, please replace the current white-wine offering with a lighter-style chardonnay.

Thanks!

Dianne

TO: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
FROM: NP@speakersoffice.gov
RE: the coffee machine

Hey Dianne—

I think I left the coffee machine on back home in California. I know it's supposed to go off automatically, but I keep worrying about fire hazards, etc. Could you please arrange for someone from our staff to fly there on a military aircraft, check the coffee machine, then fly back?? I would call that "official business," wouldn't you???

TO: CODELtraveloffice@airforce.gov
FROM: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
RE: Security issue with the Speaker's home

Hey Mike . . .

There's been some concern in this office about the security of the Speaker's home in California. Apparently, there's been a worry in this office about the safety and soundness of the coffee-making apparatus that she uses for official business when she's on official travel to her house in California. Pursuant to that, we would like to request a safety-and-security sweep of the Speaker's home ASAP, with special attention to the kitchen appliances and the coffee-making apparatus in particular. In order for her official duties in her official kitchen to be able to be conducted in safety.

Please call with any questions. This is a TIME SENSITIVE matter.

Dianne

TO: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
FROM: NP@speakersoffice.gov

I can't find one of my nice earrings. Can we get someone to look for it? I think it's in my office, but I don't know.

NP

TO: LegislativeRelations@nsa.gov
FROM: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov

Hi Jeff—

The Speaker would like to request a complete sweep of her office location—including her main office and study—ASAP. This office is concerned with a couple of security-related issues, and would appreciate a thorough and total inventory of all office items, including magnetic imagery, chemical analysis, infrared sweeping, and three-dimensional image modeling. In addition, we request that this procedure be overnighted. All costs for this process should be itemized and forwarded to Dept. of Homeland Security.

Dianne

Attachment: earring.jpg

TO: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
FROM: NP@speakersoffice.gov
RE: Family reunion!!!!!!!! Next weekend!!!!! (GULP!!!!)

Hey Dianne . . .

We're all going to Grand Cayman for a big family "do." What's the process re: air travel? Help!!!!!!

TO: CODELtraveloffice@airforce.gov
FROM: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
RE: Caribbean Basin Regional Security and Humanitarian Aid Advance Trip

Dear Mike:

The Speaker has implemented a program to assess and investigate security issues in Caribbean Basin regional security, with a special emphasis on humanitarian efforts in the region and preparedness, etc. She'll be traveling in her official capacity as Speaker of the House, and will be accompanied by the trustees of the Pelosi Foundation for Caribbean Basin Regional Security and Humanitarian Aid.

To that end, we'd like to request military aircraft for a party of 40, with all the attending staff and service, for next weekend. Ideally, this would be a two-aircraft mission, with one aircraft reserved for kids.

Also: We'd like to book a clown and/or magician.

Thanks,

Dianne

TO: Dianne@speakersoffice.gov
FROM: NP@speakersoffice.gov
RE: thnxx!!

Hey D:

Ice cream was delicious. Hit the spot. Now I'm craving something salty!!! Isn't that always the way???? What's the deal with getting some of those chips I like from that place in Larkspur?????? NP

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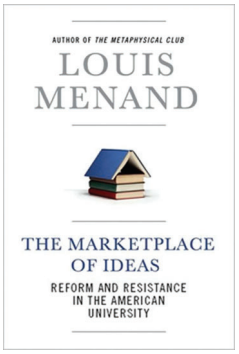
The Hollow And the Ivy

JAMES PIERESON


AUTHOR OF THE METAPHYSICAL CLUB
LOUIS MENAND
THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS
REFORM AND RESISTANCE IN THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University, by Louis Menand (Norton, 176 pp., $24.95)

WHAT accounts for the decline of humanities and liberal-arts education on college and university campuses? Why have faculties found it so difficult to agree on a replacement for the core curriculum of old? Why do professors tend to have the same politics? These are some of the questions raised by Louis Menand in this extended essay. Menand, a professor of English at Harvard and author of a prize-winning book on William James and pragmatism, speaks with some authority on these questions by virtue of having chaired a Harvard faculty committee charged with revising the general-education curriculum. That experience impressed upon him the difficulty of bringing about curricular reform within a disparate faculty spread out among many schools and departments. Faculty members may be quick to demand vast changes in government or corporate life, but they are cunningly self-protective and turf-conscious when it comes to their own affairs.

Menand, however, is a gentle critic of the academy, one who recognizes its flaws and excesses but defends it against the criticisms of those who claim that it is excessively politicized and dominated by radicals, and can no longer provide a high-quality education in the liberal arts. In this sense, *The Marketplace of Ideas* may be read as an insider's answer to Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind* (1987) or Anthony Kronman's *Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life* (2007). The latter works made a strong case for the liberal arts as traditionally understood—that is, as the investigation of the enduring questions of life through the reading of the great books from the ancient Greeks to the present.

Menand rejects this view, because he thinks the liberal arts are more about critical reasoning than about great ideas or great books. He also offers cautionary advice to academics and non-academics alike about the real limits of reform within the almost Madisonian structure of governance that has evolved on the modern campus.

Yet Menand suspects that the modern university may be on the brink of major changes owing to technological breakthroughs that have changed the ways in which knowledge is acquired and distributed. The research university is now more than a century old, and it has changed little over that time in the way it produces knowledge and trains new academics through the painstaking process of specialized research. Yet everyone can now generate information and transmit it around the world in seconds; Google and Wikipedia are the great equalizers of our age, placing the novice and the professor on the same footing when it comes to acquiring information. The plodding pace of the research university, Menand suggests, is increasingly out of step with the times and, especially, with the acquired habits of the youngsters now entering it.

But how is it likely to adapt to these challenges? Will online universities overtake the residential college? Will traditional institutions have to give up their 16-week courses for shorter and more concentrated offerings? Will they have to give up the four-year bachelor's degree in favor of something more flexible? Will specialists eventually give way to generalists? Menand does not say, and the reader is disappointed that, after stating his interesting hypothesis, he does so little to develop its likely implications.

With regard to the liberal arts, such developments are likely to make a bad situation even worse. Menand understands that the liberal arts have not fared well over the past few decades. Very few students today pass through a serious liberal-arts curriculum of the kind nearly every college student encountered a generation or two ago. Business is by far the leading undergraduate major, followed by education and health studies. Only 4 percent of college students major in English, and 2 percent in history, less than one-tenth of the 22 percent majoring in business. Twice as many students receive degrees each year in social work as receive them in foreign languages and literatures combined. Few colleges—about one in 20—prescribe a core curriculum in the liberal arts. Faculty members in the various disciplines cannot agree about either the content or the value of an education in the liberal arts; with its erstwhile advocates in disarray, it is little wonder that the enterprise has foundered.

Menand traces these problems to the organization of the modern university into specialized departments. This institutional form took shape more than a century ago. By the time the Allied powers went to war against the Kaiser in 1914, educational ideas emanating from Germany had succeeded in transforming all of the leading American universities into research institutions with specialized departments and graduate schools for the training of new scholars.

The modern university vests control over curriculum and personnel in the specialized departments rather than in deans, presidents, or trustees. This means that general academic policies, most especially the content of the undergraduate curriculum, must be negotiated among these various centers of power. Classicists and physicists, historians and astronomers, political scientists and mathematicians—all must have their piece of the curriculum. Over the course of the century, as the curriculum was periodically revised, it was also gradually watered down to

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accommodate departmental interests.

There are now two broad models of general education for undergraduates. A few colleges, including Harvard, have adopted something resembling a core curriculum in which students are required to take several common courses outside their majors. In most cases, however, this is a "core" in name only because the standard approach allows students so many choices among courses as to defeat the purpose of a common curriculum. Most institutions—more than 90 percent—have adopted the "distribution system," which requires only that students declare a major field of study, and then take a course or two in each of the other major divisions of the university.

The loosening of curricular requirements has led to an exodus of students from the liberal arts and into fields like business, health, education, and social work—in other words, into vocationally oriented fields that will at least prepare them for jobs. It is hard to blame students for making such choices when professors in the liberal arts cannot make an intellectual case for the importance of their own fields.

Menand is surprisingly philosophical—not to say complacent—about this. First of all, he does not think that things could be otherwise given the structure and incentives of the university. In addition, he suggests that the distinction between vocational studies and the liberal arts is more artificial than real: Both aim to assist students in dealing with the real world. Finally, he says, here clearly parting company with the likes of Bloom and Kronman, the liberal arts are more about teaching students how to think for themselves and how to appraise facts than they are about imparting knowledge about fundamental issues in history, politics, or philosophy. The liberal arts at their best, he says, disseminate "knowledge that exposes the contingency of present arrangements," a surprising formulation coming from an author who takes the organization of the academy so thoroughly for granted. It is also revealing of a pedagogical outlook now pervasive in the academy: that students can learn how to think before learning anything important to think about.

Given this outlook, it is easy to understand why many institutions have reformulated the liberal arts in terms of "methods of study" or "approaches to learning" in place of substantive concepts like "Western civilization" or the great books. This is the approach the Harvard faculty took when they revised their general-education curriculum in the 1970s and also the approach they took in their most recent effort (under Menand's chairmanship). Harvard requires students to take at least one course each in eight separate subject areas; in some of them, students can meet the requirement by choosing from as many as 40 different courses. In demonstration of Menand's point about the link between the structure of the academy and the content of the curriculum, the requirement in aesthetics can be met by choosing one course from a long list that includes "Women, Gender, and Sexuality," "Virgil," "The Bible," and "Buddhism and Japanese Culture." The requirement in "Culture and Belief" can be met by choosing among some 30 or 40 courses offered in fields ranging from economics to Slavic studies. Though the new program is presented as a core curriculum, it does not present students with anything approaching a common intellectual experience and is not grounded in any assumptions about what an educated person should know after four years of college.

Given the academy's weak defense of the liberal arts, they will continue to unravel on our campuses in the face of the criticism that they have nothing distinctive to offer. Given the curriculum, the criticisms are entirely valid. One can safely predict that Harvard's new curriculum will itself also unravel within a decade, as students and faculty recognize its artificiality. If this is the best the faculty can do, there is little point in maintaining the illusion of a core curriculum.

There are certainly too few conservatives on elite campuses to mount an effective defense of the liberal arts. Menand cites surveys demonstrating that more than 60 percent of professors are "liberal" while only 10 percent are "conservative." This understates the problem somewhat. In 2004, 95 percent of social-science professors at elite institutions voted for Kerry, and the remainder voted for third-party candidates. None (at least in the survey) voted for Bush. There is far more diversity of opinion in a Wall Street investment firm than in the faculty of an Ivy League university. Did this happen by accident? Menand does not say directly, but certainly implies, that academics have erected a political test for entry into their profession.

Conservatives can offer a helpful critique of the research-university model, because they trace their principles to an intellectual heritage richly different from the one that shaped it. Conservatives look back not to the German thought and practice of the 19th century, but to the Whig tradition that developed out of the British and Scottish Enlightenments of the 17th and 18th centuries. The Whig tradition emphasizes liberty, limited government, free markets, prudence in politics, and a separation between government and civil society, while the German tradition stresses planning and the priority of the state over society. Conservatism looks to Locke, Burke, Adam Smith, Hume, and *The Federalist*, while academics (outside of economics) are more likely to look in the direction of Hegel, Marx, and the Frankfurt School. Conservatives defend the achievements of the Whig tradition—the Constitution, free markets, an independent civil society—while modern liberals want to reform or overcome them. Conservative thought, if allowed inside, would enrich the academy by broadening its horizons and challenging entrenched assumptions—which would no doubt help to rescue the liberal arts from their current malaise. **NR**

AT THE RECEPTION

Up there, the braids were dark and round.
The skirt was slanting from the ground.
So suavely rocked she, swift but still,
Bride like a bell tower, like God's will.

How strangely grew, to me at four,
Her feet like flowers from the floor.
She was a steep but decorous hill,
Garlanded wilderness, God's will.

But this above all heights is strange:
No more the sky than she can change.
The sun may flower, clouds may chime.
She looms in laughter all this time;

As I within my own self loom:
An angel in a rented room,
Love's likeness in a heart this poor,
And Christ asleep in my desk drawer.

Marvelous, beyond speaking of it,
God's will is, and the will to love it.

—SARAH RUDEN

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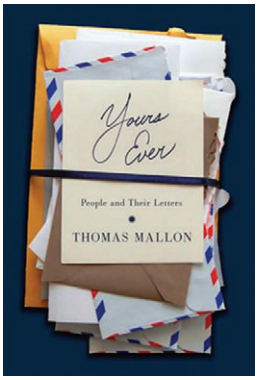
Men of Letters

FLORENCE KING



Yours Ever: People and Their Letters, by Thomas Mallon (Pantheon, 352 pp., $26.95)

DUBIOUS legend has it that the world's first letter was written by Queen Atossa of Persia, daughter of Cyrus the Great, in the sixth century B.C. We do know that the ancient Greeks had foot runners, the Romans had couriers, and early Europe had messengers, but it was all strictly government business—like the coded order to impale England's Edward II on a red-hot poker written by a bishop in league with the queen's lover. Things did not get personal until Louis XI of France formed a regular royal message service, which grew into private carriers for the rich. England followed suit, inadvertently giving us the 15th-century version of ASAP: the "Haste, Post, Haste" directive that customers wrote on the back of their missives, which entered the language as "post-haste."

Government-run mail service for all got its start in 17th-century England. The recipient paid the postage, thus spurring the sender to write interesting letters if he wanted them accepted and read. In the main, it worked: These early letters tended to be much more vivid and spontaneous than they later became in the 19th century, when they took on the characteristics of the lumbering Victorian mail coach, weighted down with self-conscious flourishes such as "Yrs. of the 15th inst. to hand" and "Ever yr. obd't serv't." The price of a stamp has included the right to drone ever since.

In 1840 the penny post was instituted and envelopes replaced sealing wax, but England's greatest boon to the epistolary art was the corner mailbox, invented by one of her most popular and prolific novelists, who managed to write one book after another without ever quitting his day job. Anthony Trollope worked for 30 years as inspector of the Royal Mail, which may be why the plots of his novels so often turn on trenchant letters.

This endlessly delightful book is the work of novelist Thomas Mallon (*Dewey Defeats Truman*), whose own sideline, as it were, is examining the literary subgenres found along the by-ways of writing. He studied diaries in *A Book of One's Own*, plagiarism in *Stolen Words*, and now in *Yours Ever* he makes reading other people's mail as much fun as we always suspected it would be.

The chapters are arranged according to epistolary categories, from Love Letters to Letters to the Editor. The first quotable letters are, not surprisingly, from the pen of the woman who transformed letter-writing from a safeguard to back up deeds and wills to an art form in its own right. Madame de Sévigné was an A-list guest at the Versailles of Louis XIV, one of those people who "knows everybody." She is the original source of the famous story that foodies and people who make fun of the French both love to tell: the chef who committed suicide when . . . something happened. No, his soufflé did not fall, and no, he did not shoot himself, and yes, Mme de Sévigné gets his name right: "The fish had not come and Vatel, the great Vatel . . . was unable to face the humiliation he saw about to overwhelm him and, in a word, stabbed himself."

Most of her letters were written to her daughter and manifest the good-cop–bad-cop technique of mothers that hasn't changed a bit since the 1670s. Moreover, says Mallon, she could turn into the *ancien régime* version of a Jewish mother, as when she advised her daughter to "look after your eyes—as to mine, you know they must be used up in your service."

Mallon pulls off a veritable miracle when he analyzes the correspondence of Franklin D. Roosevelt without a single mention of the Lucy Mercer letters. FDR's own letters were marked by an "aristocratic serenity" and the carefree enthusiasm of a country gentleman prone to a

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lingering prep-school spirit. He was "thrilled!"; everything was "grand!"; he was "tickled to death!" He leaned as heavily on the exclamation mark as Lincoln did on the question mark, enlisting punctuation in the cause of optimism even when he played the "seigneurial scold" and told people to "buck up!"

This is the FDR we know, but Mallon goes further and comes up with a fresh analysis that is stunning in its shrewdness. Given FDR's patrician background, the only people who could awe him were European royalty. He went out of his way to help several of them during WWII, even having the princess of Norway as a guest in the White House. He did this, says Mallon, as a kind of escape from his own image: "With the monarchs of Europe he could now play knight chevalier, and after years of noblesse oblige toward destitute Americans, his fealty must have been a relief."

Nobel laureates in literature do not necessarily write good letters, and Mallon does not pull his punches in singling them out. William Faulkner wrote letters mostly to receive them, "as the homesick have always done. . . . A reader amasses enough evidence—as if performing what the legal profession charmingly calls 'discovery'—to make a case for Faulkner's callowness and ordinary vulnerability. [He is] a figure out of Booth Tarkington with the humor and style of a young boy." Furthermore, his penmanship was terrible.

If you have ever felt guilty for finding Ralph Waldo Emerson boring, you may now lift up your head and sing. Mallon doesn't like him either. Emerson's letters come off as "self-deprecating, oxymoronic, philosophical flummery . . . a great self-loving clang . . . too many pages of yearning and abstraction and sky-high-mindedness" that make us crave "the hard and plain and clear."

Among the worst correspondents is the controversial writer who is ever involved in threats and lawsuits. Henry Miller, purveyor of literary sex and effluvia in *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*, was volatile, bumptious, bullying, likely to blow up over any letter's contents. Rendered paranoid by the constant criticism that he wrote "dirty" and the calls for censorship that followed him everywhere, he developed a predictable epistolary technique: "Miller would have been impossible with e-mail, which has made the telegram's instant high dudgeon affordable to all. One imagines him hitting the Send key, retracting and re-releasing sentiments with the same dosage of overstatement used in their initial dispatch. At least, in his low-tech day, he could cool down while rummaging for a stamp."

How does Mallon rate conservatives as letter writers? Political soulmates do not usually make epistolary soulmates, particularly when one is the master and the other the neophyte, because mutual admiration is not very satisfying to later readers. In the correspondence between Whittaker Chambers and Ralph de Toledano, "a sonorous morbidity dominates both sides of the exchange, each man outdoing the other with fortissimo chords." Their letters are consistently self-conscious and strained, "a fraternal echo chamber of high regard and darkest despair" that would make the average conservative reader yearn for "the jut of Barry Goldwater's jaw or the goofy grace of Ronald Reagan's smile."

Beatniks with a private income are likely to come across as schizophrenic. William Burroughs was a charter member of the Beat Generation but he was also the scion of the adding-machine family, and trust funds, like murder, will out. Furious when Louisiana law ruled that he could not evict his tenants without removing the property from the rental market, he wrote his Boswell, Allen Ginsberg, "We are bogged down in this octopus of bureaucratic socialism." He also called liberals "vindictive, mean, and petty," and took a dig at Jack Kerouac worthy of H. L. Mencken. Hearing the plans for the cross-country car trip that would become the basis for Kerouac's *On the Road*, he said, "For sheer compulsive pointlessness [it] compares favorably with the mass migration of the Mayans."

Unfortunately, murder, like trust funds, will out also. In a letter to Ginsberg he describes the drunken game of William Tell that he and his wife were playing the night she died. He had a gun and she had a glass on her head, and the next thing he knew . . . In his letter he rejects Freudian theories about unconscious intent on his part and instead blames his wife's death on her "bullet-seeking brain." Then he tells Ginsberg: "Better save my letters, maybe we can get a book out of them later on when I have a rep."

It is easy to tell who Mallon's favorite letter writers are, and he makes his case in just three pages. Virginia Woolf and Vita

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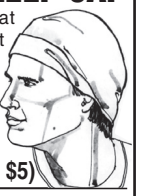

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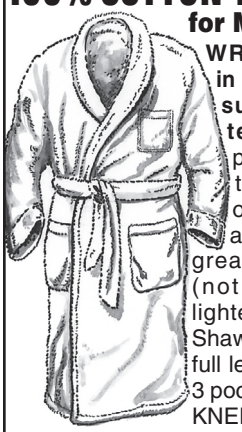

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Sackville-West were lesbians blessed with two of the most supportive husbands in history, literary or otherwise. Virginia, an upper-middle-class aesthete, was an intellectual novelist and co-owner, with her husband, Leonard, of the Hogarth Press. Vita, an aristocrat whose highly popular commercial novels accounted for most of Hogarth's profits, was married to Sir Harold Nicolson, who saw no reason that his own homosexuality and that of his wife should interfere with the duty and pleasure of building a solid English family life.

Nor did it. Vita's sexuality was a force to be reckoned with, as the patrons of Parisian sapphic nightclubs could attest. Virginia attested to it in a masterly use of erotic indirection when she described Vita as "all fire and legs and beautiful plunging ways like a young horse." Mallon attests that Vita "swept over the land like some fifth season, harvesting sensations as soon as the earth could thrust them up." But she also swept over the land in her wellies, slogging through mud with her son's Boy Scout troop on jolly weekends in the country. She could go from denizen of a den of iniquity to den mother without missing a beat. She always kept her head, and always found a sensible way to cope, as she proves in a wonderfully evocative sentence in a letter written while on a stuffy Russian train: "I have smashed the windows with a corkscrew, and a thin shrill pencil of frozen air rushes in reviving us."

Given our present cultural collapse, we owe a debt of gratitude to these women, and Mallon evidently feels the same way: "Love was never allowed to overwhelm work, marriage, or self-protection," he concludes. "Sense always triumphed over sensibility, so much so that there is a kind of erotic rationality to their correspondence. Not the least sexy thing about these lovers is that they never ran away with one another."

There are many, many more delicious quotes in this book, so many that my Hi-Liter ran dry, but I can't resist three last one-liners.

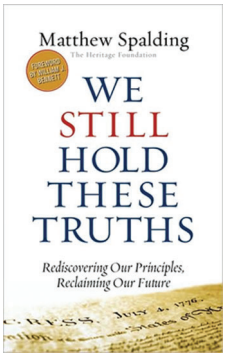
Jessica Mitford's Luddite put-down of a faxed letter: "Yours of 9:54 rec'd."

Mallon on Lord Byron: "From birth, Byron seemed bent on becoming an adjective."

Mallon's take on high- vs. low-tech: "Does anybody really want to buy Casanova's hard drive?" NR

Back to Basics

RYAN T. ANDERSON


Matthew Spalding
The Heritage Foundation
WE STILL HOLD THESE TRUTHS
Rediscovering Our Principles, Reclaiming Our Future

We Still Hold These Truths: Rediscovering Our Principles, Reclaiming Our Future, by Matthew Spalding (ISI, 288 pp., $26.95)

For many today, the American Revolution was primarily a military campaign. But the "*real* American Revolution," John Adams insisted, "was in the minds and hearts of the people," transforming their "principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections." According to Alexander Hamilton, America was to be the experiment that revealed "whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force."

Perhaps this is why Benjamin Franklin, when asked what type of government the Founders had created, quipped in reply: "A republic, if you can keep it." Helping to keep our republic by reclaiming the Founders' wisdom is the goal Matthew Spalding has set for himself in this new book. The director of the Center for American Studies at the Heritage Foundation, Spalding holds a doctorate in political philosophy and American government from Claremont Graduate University, and, accordingly, his narrative is straight from the West Coast Straussian history book: The American Founders overcame the perennial problems of political life by becoming the first to establish government on true principles of political liberty; Abraham Lincoln completed their work by bringing these principles to their logical conclusions; but the Progressive Movement sought to replace these principles with relativism and historicism, and our constitutional government with the administrative state.

Spalding presents a clear, concise, and largely accurate picture of the philosophy that inspired the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In doing so, he resists the urge to paint the Founders into any particular ideological box: They read their history and political philosophy, but were constantly updating in light of experience with colonial government; they believed what the Bible taught, but also thought man could know political truth by reflection on the laws of nature; they studied Aristotle and Cicero, but also Locke, Montesquieu, Coke, and Blackstone.

At the heart of the Founding, Spalding argues, is the profound truth that, as Thomas Jefferson wrote, the "mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God." Thus, though unequal in other ways, all are created equal in their basic capacities for ordered liberty, for self-directed action in accordance with morality. As a result, divine-right monarchies and birthright aristocracies must go; legitimate government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. It is grounded not in custom or convention but on the firm foundation of universal principle: natural rights that man possesses in virtue of the laws of nature and nature's God. Being natural, man's rights are not gifts from the state, the church, or noble landed gentry. Rather, they precede the state, which exists to protect them. Insofar as it fails to do so, the people may abolish one government and form another.

The argument of the preceding paragraph is Locke's *Second Treatise* in a nutshell. It's also Jefferson's summary of the American mind as expressed in the Declaration. The key insight, Spalding argues, is that the state is subservient to the people, not vice versa. It is inherently limited by man's natural rights to (for instance) life, liberty, and private property. For Spalding, the most important are rights to religious and economic liberty.

Throughout history, attempts to recon-

Mr. Anderson is editor of Public Discourse: Ethics, Law, and the Common Good, *an online publication of the Witherspoon Institute.*

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cile politics and religion have often failed, resulting in a fusion of throne and altar or a subjugation of one to the other. America was to avoid all of this. Political decisions about the common good were to be answered within a Judeo-Christian worldview, without doubt, but issues of church governance and worship were seen as matters of individual conscience, not political relevance. While establishing a formal independence of the institutions of church and state, the nation would not be hostile to religious belief and practice. In fact, the Founders saw this independence as a service to religion, and history has vindicated their judgment. Religious life in America thrives precisely because churches are free from government interference and free to compete for souls. Meanwhile, individuals are free to respond as their conscience requires. None of this, Spalding notes, implies "the separation of religion and politics, or the expunging of religion from public life."

Just as the liberty to act on one's conscience regarding such ultimate matters is a natural right, so is the liberty to create wealth and have it protected by law. Hence John Adams: "The moment the idea is admitted into society, that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence." The Founders viewed economic liberty both as important in its own right and as a precondition of other liberties: If man was at liberty to secure a home, land, food, and leisure activities, Spalding argues, "he could be independent, and so he could be free." Spalding continues: "The essence of liberty is the freedom to develop one's talents, pursue opportunity, and generally take responsibility for one's own life and wellbeing." Government was to protect man's freedom to do this by establishing a fair framework for production and exchange, enforcing contracts, and protecting property rights—not by economic interference or the pursuit of specific economic outcomes. This allowed America to develop from a group of agricultural colonies into the world's leading industrial nation. It also allowed for unprecedented class mobility.

If protecting natural rights was the Founders' end, the rule of law and constitutionalism were their means. In his discussion of the debates that produced the Constitution, Spalding notes that the trick, as Madison argued, was to "first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself." To do this, America was to be "a government of laws, not of men." These laws would be clearly promulgated, based on justice and the common good, and enforced for rulers and ruled alike. And what allowed the system to work was virtue. Spalding notes that while America "does not require a common theology," it "does depend on a common morality shared by all people that is rooted in both faith and reason." For John Adams, "our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." After all, only if we master ourselves as individuals can we govern ourselves as a polity. But how can we do this? Better than the government, the local institutions of civil society can shape our character and care for our downtrodden. Only in this way could the state remain within its proper sphere of protecting natural rights.

Natural rights, limited government, public morality and religion, space for the institutions of civil society to care for the poor—if this is what the Founders sought to establish, Spalding argues, it's also what the Progressives sought to undo. The latter denied eternal truths, including permanent principles of justice. Everything is ultimately relative to history, and thus, as Woodrow Wilson put it, politics "is accountable to Darwin, not to Newton." Human nature itself is in flux, a mere social construct that can be refashioned by the experts controlling the state. In their enlightened quest for "Progress," they tasked the national government with providing material blessings. For this, they needed to reinterpret the Constitution: Witness FDR's court-packing scheme and "living Constitution" theories. A new class of bureaucrats was to rise above partisan interests to govern us according to the new science of progressive ideals. What was left of rights, therefore, wasn't a system of checks and limits on the state, but a series of entitlements one came to expect from the state. The welfare state of the New Deal and Great Society was born.

"The way I see it, if the governement doesn't reward failure, who will?"

And here we are today. Perhaps becoming familiar with our founding principles can help reverse the tide against limited government. For that, Matthew Spalding's book will be invaluable. Still, it has some limitations, ones that reflect poorly not on Spalding but on the American public. For he has written the book that Americans need now—a basic work on what used to be common knowledge. Nowhere does Spalding wrestle with the competing (legitimate) interpretations of what the Founders did or what inspired them. Debates rage among scholars over the relative contributions of ancients and moderns, Biblical religion and atheistic philosophy, on the Founders' thought: Is America essentially Aristotelian, Christian, or Lockean? Spalding can't wade into these waters because his audience hasn't even gotten its feet wet.

Once one is acclimated to the water, though, there is room for doubts about the adequacy of Founding-era philosophy. If one agrees with Michael Zuckert that the Founding was essentially Lockean in spirit and if, as Spalding argues, it was preoccupied with protecting natural rights, then it faces well-known difficulties. Lockean thought is too limited to help us think through many of the dilemmas of our day. Taking rights as its starting point, it lacks a robust understanding of human nature, giving short shrift to the goods that perfect that nature and the principles that should guide our individual and collective pursuit of those goods. Even in Spalding's account (which would interpret Locke "in light of classical political reason and Biblical revelation"), there is too much talk of liberty and independence and not enough recognition of the myriad ways in which man is, as Alasdair MacIntyre argues, a dependent rational animal. One wouldn't be at fault for doubting whether all that government legitimately does can be expressed and analyzed in terms of "rights" (natural or otherwise). The protection of rights is an important part of the political common good, but not the whole of it.

Even so, the political structures that the Founders established are remarkably good. Perhaps this is what previous generations meant when they argued that the Founders built better than they knew. And perhaps this is what makes America so revolutionary. **NR**

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Film

Unhappy Returns

ROSS DOUTHAT

THERE'S a fine line between being a crazy, paranoid, violence-obsessed genius, and just being plain old crazy. In the first half of the 2000s, Mel Gibson managed to stay (just barely, sometimes) on the genius side of the line. His obvious instability was balanced, if not excused, by the weird, mad brilliance of his two self-financed directorial efforts, *The Passion of the Christ* and *Apocalypto*. Sure, he grew a Jeremiah Johnson beard and said bizarre things to interviewers, but he also made two of the decade's most distinctive, arresting, and uncompromising movies—with subtitles, no less!

By the time *Apocalypto* hit theaters, though, Gibson had delivered his famous post-DUI tirade against the international Jewish conspiracy, offered his round of apologies, and vanished from the public eye. In the next four years, there were no more movies; instead, there was a mistress, a love child, and the end of his 29-year marriage. The rant against the Jews cemented his reputation as an anti-Semite. The mistress and the divorce demolished his credibility with *The Passion*'s religious fan base. And the absence of any creative work made it easy to forget about Gibson's talent, and remember only his nuttiness.

Sad to say, his return to theaters as the star of this month's *Edge of Darkness* isn't likely to improve his reputation. Gibson didn't direct the thriller, but it still feels like a Mel movie. There's the man-on-a-mission plot, the bone-crunching violence, and the air of martyrdom; there are echoes of *Braveheart* and the *Lethal Weapon* saga, *Conspiracy Theory* and *The Passion*. What's missing, unfortunately, is originality, intelligence, and narrative coherence—not to mention anything resembling art.

With a better script, the plot could have been straightforward and grimly satisfying. Gibson plays Craven, a widowed Boston cop, whose daughter Emma (Bojana Novakovic) is gunned down on his doorstep, by bullets that everyone assumes were meant for him. But it quickly becomes apparent that Emma had more enemies than her father. She was an intern for Northmoor, a shady Massachusetts-based outpost of the military-industrial complex, where she uncovered a Vast Conspiracy, tried to do something about it, and ended up at the wrong end of a professional rubout.

The only question is whodunit. Was it the eco-terrorist group Nightflower, to whom Emma turned for help? Or her jumpy, guilty-seeming boyfriend? Or Northmoor's chief executive, embodied by Danny Huston, who excels at playing characters with something of the night about them? Or perhaps the mysterious Darius Jedburgh (Ray Winstone), a British-accented spook who hovers around the proceedings, trailing smoke from his cigars? Or even Sen. Jim Pine, a Massachusetts Republican (!) with incriminating ties to Northmoor?

Where the senator's implausible party affiliation is concerned, I suppose that *Edge of Darkness* deserves points for prescience, even if the sinister Pine seems more like a John Kerry–esque Brahmin than a Scott Brown populist. And the cucumber-cool Jedburgh is an amusing fillip of a character, carried off with pure attitude by Winstone.

But the rest of the film is a dreadful mess. The mystery is basically resolved before the movie is half over: You know roughly how Emma died and why, and the only question is how long it will take the bad guys to realize that Craven's on to them, and how long it will take him to wreak his vengeance.

The answer, unfortunately, is quite a while. The script is adapted and condensed from a six-hour 1980s British miniseries—with War on Terror conspiracy theories replacing Thatcher-era nuclear-power panic—but somebody should have condensed things a bit more. Every time you think the movie will take a clever turn, it takes a stupid one instead. The good guys leave obvious leads unfollowed and self-evident stratagems untried. The bad guys murder some characters for no apparent reason, leave obvious targets very much alive, and engage in a hilarious kind of overkill when it finally comes time to take the fight to Craven. In the movie's closing scenes, he's variously poisoned, beaten, shot at, kidnapped—and, perhaps worst of all, threatened with a long, drawn-out court battle in the litigious state of Massachusetts.

The lawsuit aside, this cascade of agony is quintessential Gibson. But it's Gibson without any of the qualities that make his better movies fascinating. *Edge of Darkness* offers violence without weight, paranoia without insight, and martyrdom without a deeper meaning. If you're inclined to dismiss Mad Mel as an artless masochist, you won't find anything here to change your mind. And if you've been hoping that he'd emerge from his four-year hiatus with a movie worthy of his talent, you're in for a grim, unthrilling disappointment. NR

WARNER BROS.

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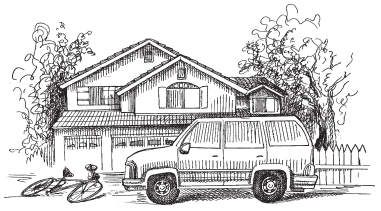
The Straggler

Second Childhood



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

"All those years we thought we were building Communism! Actually they've built Communism right here in the U.S.A.!"

This gets the biggest laugh of the evening. All seven of us in the room laugh, including me, the only non-Chinese. Somebody quotes one of Chairman Mao's tremendous Thoughts, "We should pay close attention to the well-being of the masses," to more merriment. This is not really cynicism, just amused acknowledgment of the strange, unpredictable way nations have evolved in the lifetimes of us fifty- and sixtysomethings. Of contradictions, the Chairman would have said.

We are discussing the extravagant welfare benefits on offer to immigrants here in New York, a topic of great fascination to recent Chinese arrivals—and, I suppose, to newcomers from other Third World locations, though I have no direct knowledge beyond the Chinese. Medicaid seems to be especially popular, and strategies for keeping one's recorded income low enough to get on the Medicaid rolls are eagerly exchanged. The magic number right now, known to everyone present, is $800. "Don't let the boss pay you more than eight hundred by check! Over eight hundred—cash only!"

Not that the evening's company is really representative of the masses, huddled or otherwise. Our host is in fact a wealthy man, one of China's new rich. The event is a housewarming party. We are sitting around in the living room of a luxury apartment he has just bought for his son, a student at a local university. The apartment is high up in one of the grand new developments near Battery Park, at the southern tip of Manhattan Island. Thirty years ago our host was a student in the provincial Chinese college where I taught English. Mrs. Straggler was one of his classmates. The third couple present were colleagues of mine, lecturers at the college. They came out in the late 1980s, and are now U.S. citizens. Their daughter, just arrived in the U.S. under their sponsorship, is also with us. Children and grandchildren are off in other rooms playing computer games.

This daughter and her husband ran a successful business in China, had a nice apartment and a *car*—were upper-middle-class by Chinese standards. I was somewhat surprised to learn that they will settle here, and have already bought a small store in one of the outer boroughs. Why leave the good life they had in China? I ask her. Neither speaks much English. Why come to a strange place and struggle with foreign ways? "For the kids," she replies. The kids, I discovered by chatting with them earlier, are fine with it. Education in China is a grueling business—long days, short vacations, intensely competitive. The slack, dumbed-down, unionized schools of New York are a liberation for these kids.

Being an immigrant resembles childhood in many ways. Already irrevocably formed in some key respects, you are thrust into an environment where you must master the language, the customs, and the social graces, and suffer being pushed around by forces you have not learned to control.

Infant-development guru Alison Gopnik, on the subject of what it's like to be a baby: "It's like being in a foreign country . . ."

James Boswell, on Dr. Johnson's refusing to speak French when in France: "It was a maxim with him that a man should not let himself down, by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly. Indeed, we must have often observed how inferiour, how much like a child a man appears, who speaks a broken tongue."

H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N, confronted with a substitute teacher at the Night Preparatory School for Adults: "Podden me, Titcher. Can ve know plizz your name?"

You don't have to be Chinese. After 30 years in this country I still can't pronounce "schedule" right, or use "gotten" unselfconsciously. I still don't know why we need so many lawyers, or what the point of the Modern Movement in literature was, or why anyone thinks peanut butter goes with jam—I mean, jelly. A first-generation immigrant is a child at any age; that's why it's all much easier for children. The current fad for infantilizing immigrants, as we infantilize all we imagine to be "victim" groups, magnifies the effect; but being an immigrant was sufficiently infantile even before racial guilt and elite condescension cast their sanctimonious blights on the issue.

These thoughts lead off into some worrisome territory. The news from modern research in psychology is that a child's BIPs—behavior, intelligence, personality—can be tugged or pushed in all sorts of ways; but that when we reach adulthood and can select our own environment, inheritance asserts itself, like those mysterious metal alloys that remember their original shape and revert to it when heated. A 30-year-old resembles his parents and siblings more closely than does a 15-year-old. The advice traditionally given to young men seeking a wife—"Get a good look at her mom"—is sound.

Could the same be true of human groups? When the novelty and pressures of early adjustment have been weathered, do we, and our offspring, revert to ancestral type? Shall I soon begin looking up cricket scores, buying tweed suits, and seeking out pork pies and brown ale? I note with interest that Mrs. Straggler, 25 years in the U.S. and newly unemployed, is studying for a civil-service exam—just about the most Chinese thing a human being can do.

Our host's living room has a big picture window looking down on New York Harbor. There is Lady Liberty, her torch aloft and lit. *Mother of Exiles*. I am, like most first-generation immigrants, immune to immigration sentimentality, and I actually know the history of that statue (whose conception had nothing to do with immigration) and that poem (an afterthought added 17 years later, and to be found *inside* the plinth). You move from that country to this one and settle in as best you can. Victim? To judge by the glee with which my fellow immigrants set about gaming the welfare system, the principal victim of current immigration policy is the U.S. taxpayer.

That is, of course, a deeply un-American view of things—yet more evidence that I have still, after 30 years, not emerged from that off-the-boat second childhood. NR

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Happy Warrior

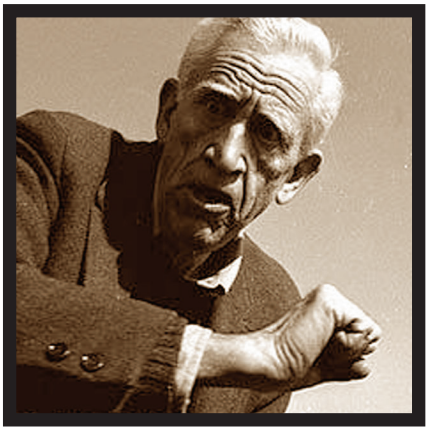
BY MARK STEYN

Recluseland

I'm not sure I'm the go-to guy for a disquisition on *The Catcher in the Rye*, but I confess I was always intrigued by the J. D. Salinger lifestyle, at least since I moved to New Hampshire. He was a ways down the Connecticut River from me, but in this neck of the woods it's a small world. I was once on a BBC current-affairs show and the sneering host produced a Solzhenitsyn quote designed to demonstrate that my view of American preeminence was all hooey, and rounded it out with a snide "I take it you've heard of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn?"

"Oh, sure," I said. "We have the same piano tuner." Which, at that point, we did.

I never had the same piano tuner as J. D. Salinger. But he was a useful point of reference. A few years ago, the British novelist Sebastian Faulks came to stay with me. Sebastian leads a glittering life in literary London: You may recall him quaffing champagne with Salman Rushdie and Renée Zellweger in a party scene from the film of *Bridget Jones's Diary*. So staying with me in the North Country was a bit like detox. "No, no," I explained. "You've got it all wrong. It just looks like the place is a dump, and that I lead an extremely dull life. In fact I'm a recluse. You know, like J. D. Salinger."



As all the world seemed to know, Salinger lived in Cornish, N.H. Exit 8 off I-91, follow the signs to the theme park ("Recluseland 6 miles"), you can't miss it. The only fellow I know down there is a chap called N. Scott Stevens, who was head of the White Mountain Militia back when Dan Rather used to go on about "the shadowy right-wing militia movement" all the time. Still, how shadowy could it be? I went into the general store and said, "I'm trying to find Scott Stevens," and after a pregnant silence one of the guys said, "Scott's not the kind of guy who likes to be found."

They were more inventive with Salinger fans, sending inquisitive tourists on wild-goose chases deep into the hinterland. Peter Burling, a neighbor of his and at the time a state senator, made a toy bus stop for his kid and stuck it down at the bottom of their hill, and it got about that this little shelter marked the turn to Salinger's pad. Mr. Burling sold the bus stop to another neighbor, Clark Rockefeller, who took it down the road and stapled it on the side of his house. So Mr. Rockefeller started getting the literary groupies. And "Clark" had even less desire to be found than N. Scott Stevens. He was not, as he claimed to be, a minor Rockefeller, but a psychotic German called Christian Karl Gerhartsreiter, subsequently arrested for the kidnapping of his daughter in Boston and also wanted in connection with the disappearance of a California couple.

I wouldn't want to give the impression that this is a statistically representative sample of a small New Hampshire town—one elected official, one militia member, one psycho on the lam, one reclusive novelist—but it comes close. The Granite State is a great place to come to be left alone. Salinger was never that "reclusive": He participated at Town Meeting and was a regular at church suppers, and in return his neighbors clammed up when out-of-towners showed up asking questions. Of course, not everyone wants to be left alone, and if, unlike Salinger and Scott Stevens and "Clark Rockefeller," you'd actually like to be found by somebody—*anybody*—you're pretty much in the wrong state. In the small towns of Coos County, just below the Quebec border, there is an excellent publication on sale in most general stores, in which lonely loggers and the like advertise for women to get them through the long winter. I place my ad every November and, although results are mixed, I can safely say that in a million years you could never attract a more disastrous respondent than J. D. Salinger's most famous admirer. One day in 1972 he saw an emaciated pixie staring out at him from the cover of *The New York Times Magazine*. She was a precocious writer called Joyce Maynard. He read the accompanying piece, and invited her to Cornish.

She was 18, he was 35 years older, but they had a lot in common: He was a writer. So was she. He liked *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. So did she. Which was just as well, as the conversation rarely reached the literary heights Miss Maynard had been hoping for. When their affair ended, she became the antithesis of Salinger, one of those writers for whom all life is copy. Ergo, if you're in her life, you'll wind up in her writing—as her children, her ex-husband, her friends, and her breast implants all subsequently discovered. And so, in the fullness of time, did J. D. Salinger. In its careless betrayals, her memoir is a fascinating portrait of an icon after hours. Occasionally, the great man even stops talking about TV long enough to give his teenage protégée his unique perspective on the writer's struggle. "Every damned time we sit down to work, it's that same blank page again," he says. "A person could have a better time at a Doug McClure retrospective."

For younger readers, Doug McClure played Trampas in *The Virginian* on NBC from 1962 to 1971.

As the years go by, it's become my favorite Salinger line, far better than anything in *The Catcher in the Rye*. And it is, in its way, a profound insight. Someone should mount a Doug McClure retrospective, just to see how many reclusive novelists show up. **NR**

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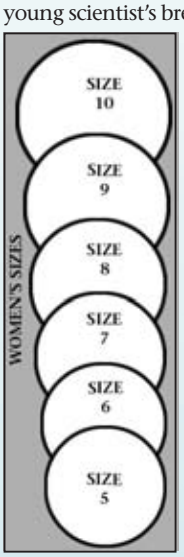

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